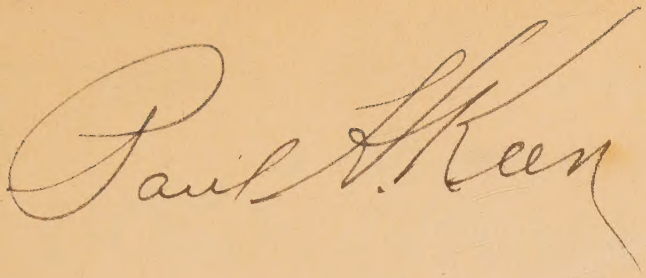
The Doom Trail

ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH

MAP of the Country of the FIVE NATIO
and of the LAKES near which the Nations o

belonging to the Province of NEW YORK
AR INDIANS live, with part of CANADA.



THE DOOM TRAIL

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THE DOOM TRAIL

BY

ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH

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BEYOND THE SUNSET, ETC.

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PROLOGUE

O my reader, rest a while at our Council Fire before you set your feet upon the long trail which leads into the dim regions of Ta-de, which is—or was—Yesterday.

See, we will sprinkle tobacco leaves upon the flames and on the spirals of the smoke ascending upward our words shall be carried to the ears of Ha-wen-ne-yu, the Great Spirit.

Behold, O my reader, we give you a White Belt in token that our words are straight.

That which has been is no more. We of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, the People of the Long House, are scattered so that only Ga-oh, the Old Man of the Winds, can tell where the remnants dwell. The Long House, where our women sowed and reaped and our warriors hunted, is the spoil of the white man. His roads have wiped out the trails stamped by our war parties in the days of our power. His towns have replaced our villages. He has chased the wild things into the recesses of the Adirondack hills.

The Great League itself, which Da-ga-no-we-da and Ha-yo-wont-ha, the Founders, intended should live for all time, is no more than a memory locked in our breasts. The Council Fire which they kindled no longer burns at Onondaga. Gone is the Ho-yar-na-go-war, the Council of the Roy-an-ehs, whose word was supreme from the shores of the Great Lakes to the lands of the Wa-sa-seh-o-no, whom the white men call the Sioux, and the O-ya-da-ga-o-no, whom the white men name the Cherokees. The Seneca Wolves have abandoned their watch at the Western Door of the Long House which opens upon the Thunder Waters of Jagara; the Mohawk Wolves no longer guard the Eastern Door by the shores of the Ska-neh-ta-de, which the white men have renamed the Hudson.

It is meet that we should mourn. But hear us, O my reader, hear us further.

Once we were a nation. Once we were strong. Once even the white man feared us. Once it was for us to say who should rule the land outside the Long House, Frenchman or Englishman. The white men were weak then. They clamored for our aid. We chose the side of the Englishman. He triumphed.

Remember, O my reader, but for us you might not have been here

to sit by our Council Fire to-night. Black Robe and de Veulle, Murray and Joncaire, would have won the struggle; the French King would have become master. All that has come to pass would never have been. The unfolding years would have told another story. But the People of the Long House cast their fortunes with Governor Burnet, who in our tongue was called Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, and Ormerod, whom the Keepers of the Faith renamed O-te-ti-ani. It was Ta-wanne-ars and the warriors of the Eight Clans who helped O-te-ti-ani and Corlaer, the Dutchman with the fat belly, to break down the barriers of "The Doom Trail" and overcome the "Keepers of the Trail."

Remember that, O my reader. This tale which follows is true talk. It was as it is written.

Na-ho!

THE DOOM TRAIL

I

THE FRAY IN MINCING LANE

"WATCH! Ho, watch!"

The words rang through the misty darkness of the narrow street. I gathered my cloak around me and skulked closer to the nearest house-wall. Could it be possible the Bow Street runners had picked up my trail again?

And a new worry assailed me. Did the cry come from in front or behind? The fog that mantled London, and which so far had stood my friend, now served to muffle the source of this sudden alarm. Which way should I turn?

"Watch! Curse the sleepy varlets!"

The houses past which I had been feeling my way came to an end. An alley branched off to the right and from its entrance echoed the click of steel—music after my own heart. The blood coursed faster in my veins. No, this could be no trap such as had awaited me ever since I had stepped from the smuggler's small boat. Here was sword-play, a welcome change from the plotting and intrigue which had sickened me.

I cast my cloak back over my shoulder and drew my sword from its sheath, as I ran over the uneven cobbles which paved the alley. Dimly I saw before me a confused

huddle of figures that tussled and stamped about in the ghostly mirk of the fog.

"Hold, friend," I shouted.

"Make haste," panted a voice from the middle of the group. "Ha, you scoundrel! You pinked me then."

One man against a gang of assassins! So that was the story. It savored more of Paris than of the staid London of merchants and shop-keepers over which the Hanoverian exercised his stolid sway.

But I had scant time for philosophy. A figure detached itself from the central swarm and came lunging at me with cutlas aswing. I parried his blade and touched him in the shoulder. He bellowed for aid.

"This is no fat alderman, bullies. He wields a swift point. To me, a brace of ye."

They were on me in an instant, my first assailant in front, an assassin on either hand, slashing with hangers and cutlases that knew no tricks of fence, but only downright force. Their former prey was left with one to handle.

"Get to his rear, one of you, fools," snarled the ruffian in command whilst he pounded at my guard.

But I backed into a handy doorway and barely managed to fend them off. And all the while the real object of their attack continued his appeals for the watch.

'Twas this which spoiled the fray for me. I could not but wonder, as I dodged and parried and thrust, what would happen if his cries should be heard and the watch appear. Would they know me? Or perchance should I have the opportunity to slip quietly away?

I stole a glance about me. Several windows had gone up along the street, and nightcapped heads protruded to add their clamor to that of my friend.

Surely— Aye, they had done it. The ruffian on my left leaped back with ear aslant toward the alley entrance.

"Quick, bullies," he yelled. " 'Tis the watch!"

With a celerity that was almost uncanny they disengaged their blades and melted into the fog. Their footfalls

dwindled around the corner as I detected the clumping footfalls of the approaching guardians of London's peace.

This brought me to my senses. I sheathed my sword and ran across the roadway, glancing to right and left for the best route of escape. But I reckoned without the other participant in our brawl.

"Be at ease, my master," he said in a voice which had a good thick Dorset burr in it—I liked him from that moment. It sounded so homelike; I could fairly see the rolling fields, the water meadows, the copses, all the scenes that had meant so much to me in boyhood, even the sprawling roofs and chimney stacks of Foxcroft House itself.

"I have reasons not to be at ease," I answered dryly, and would have passed him, but he clutched my arm.

"We have seen an end to the rascals," he strove to reassure me. " 'Tis only the watch you hear. Hark to the jingling of their staves."

"I know that full well, my friend," I answered him, goose-flesh rising on my neck as the jingling staves and clumping feet drew nearer; and my thoughts fastened upon the dungeons of the Tower about which we had heard frequent tales at St. Germain. "But I happen to have pressing reasons for avoiding the watch."

My friend pursed his lips in a low whistle.

"So sets the wind in that quarter! Yet you came fast to my help against those cut-purses a moment back."

I laughed. The watch were all but in the alley's mouth. 'Twas idle to think of running now. Indeed, to have done so would have been to banish whatever slight chance I might have had.

"Oh, I am no highwayman," I said.

"Well, whatever you may be, you aided Robert Juggins in his peril, and 'twill be a sore pity if a Worshipful Alderman of the City may not see you through the scrutiny of a band of lazy bench-loafers."

"That is good hearing," I answered.

"Will they have your description?"

"I think not, but if they ask me to account for myself I shall be at fault. I am but lately landed from France, and I have no passport."

He pursed his lips once more in the quaint form of a low whistle.

"I begin to see. Well, my master, we will talk of your plight anon. For the present I have somewhat to say to our gallant rescuers which will put their thoughts upon other matters than young men fresh landed from France without passports to identify themselves by."

He swept a shrewd glance over me from my hat to my heels.

"There is a foreign cut to your wig that I do not like," he commented. "However, we will brazen it out. Here they come."

The watchmen rounded the corner into the alley, lanterns swinging high, staves poised.

"Ho, knaves," proclaimed a pompous voice, "stand and deliver yourselves to us."

"And who may you be?" demanded my friend.

"No friends to brawlers and disturbers of the peace, sirrah," replied the stoutest of the watchmen, stepping to the front of his fellows. "We are the duly constituted and appointed constables and watchmen of his Honor the Worshipful Lord Mayor."

"It would be nearer truth to say that you are the properly constituted and habituated sleepers and time-servers of the city," snapped my companion. "Draw nearer, and examine me."

"Be not rash, captain," quavered one of the watchmen. "He hath the appearance of a most desperate Mohock."

"Nay, sir," adjured the captain of the watch portentously, "do you approach and render yourselves to us. 'Tis not for law-breakers to order the city's watchmen how they shall be apprehended."

"You fool," said my friend very pleasantly, "if you would only trust your eyes you would see a face you have

many times seen before this—aye, and shall see again in the morning before the bench of sheriffs when you plead forgiveness for your dilatory performance of the duties entrusted to you."

The watchmen were confused.

"Be cautious, my masters," pleaded the one with the quavering voice. " 'Tis like enough a desperate rogue and a strong."

My friend left my side and strode forward toward the captain of the watch, who gave back a pace or two until he felt the stomachs of his followers at his back.

"How now," said he who had called himself Robert Juggins, "hold up that lantern, you, sirrah, with the shaking arm. Look into my face, lazy dogs that you are. Dost know me?"

" 'Tis Master Juggins," quoth the quavering voice. "Praise be for that."

"You know me, now?" pressed Master Juggins, poking his finger into the fat figure of the captain.

"Sure, you are Master Juggins," assented that official with sullen reluctance.

"And is an alderman of the city and a cupmate of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs and the Warden of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Traders to the Western Plantations, on his way home from a meeting of his gild, within the city precincts—aye, in Mincing Lane, under the shadow of Paul's—I say am I to be held up by cut-purses, stabbed in the arm, forced to defend my very life—and then denounced and threatened with arrest by the watchmen paid by the city to protect its citizens?"

Master Juggins stopped perforce for breath.

"How say you, knaves?" he resumed. "Of what use have you been? Did you come at my call? Aye, like the sluggards you are. Have you done aught to run down the thieves and assassins who work under your noses?

"You stand here trying to prove that 'tis I, and not they, who have sought to rob myself. Go to! Ye are worthless,

and I shall see that the Sheriffs and the Magistrates at Bow Street know of it."

"But, good Master Juggins," begged the captain, now thoroughly aroused to his plight, "sure you——"

"Sure I will," retorted Master Juggins, who had caught another lungful of breath. "Had it not been for this good citizen here—" he swept an arm in my direction—"it had been a corpse you would have found. So much for your diligence and courage!"

"But we will be after the scoundrels, worshipful Master Alderman," pleaded the captain.

"Aye, we shall be hard on their heels, Master Juggins," assured he of the quavery voice.

"Doubt not our diligence, worthy sir!" appealed a third.

"Can you but give us a description of the knaves?" suggested a fourth.

"Shall I do your work for you?" replied Master Juggins in his delightful Dorset burr. Zounds! How I liked the man with his broad humor, his ready courage and prompt good sense!

"Nay, but——"

"But me no buts. Be about your rounds. And if you see any hang-dog-looking rogues or homeless knaves or masterless men, do you apprehend them for the night and lodge them in the Fleet. In the morning you may let me know what you have done. I will then consider whether your belated efforts may overset your cowardice and laziness in the beginning."

"It shall be as you say, good Master Juggins," assented the captain meekly. "Which way went your assailants?"

"What? More questions?" exploded Master Juggins. "Nay, this is too much."

The watchmen turned in their tracks and herded out of the alley like bewildered cattle, all clumping boots, jingling staffs, waving lanterns and jumbled wits. My savior removed his hat and mopped his brow with a white kerchief.

"So much for that," he remarked cheerfully. "Now——"

But he was interrupted from an unexpected quarter. The captain of the watch returned alone.

"I crave your pardon, Master Juggins," he began.

"You well may," agreed Master Juggins.

"Aye; but, good sir, if you will be so kind——"

"Kind I will not be. What, sirrah, after all the insults I have listened to and being nearly murdered into the bargain?"

"No, but worshipful Master Alderman, do you but bear with me an instant. I have a thought——"

" 'Tis impossible," pronounced Master Juggins solemnly.

I felt my heart warm to the man. If he was typical of the London citizens then was I glad to be quit of St. Germain and all its atmosphere of petty intrigues and Jesuitical sophistries.

"Aye, but I have," insisted the captain. "We have been warned to keep a watch for a dangerous malefactor, an enemy of the State, one Ormerod, an emissary of the Pretender who is here on an errand against the Crown."

Juggins favored me with a cursory glance of a somewhat peculiar nature. It was not exactly hostile, and yet much of the friendliness which had characterized his manner was gone.

I felt cold chills running down my back. Would he give me up? What right after all had I to expect better treatment from a total stranger, a man who had nothing to gain from shielding me? My knowledge of the world had been acquired mainly from the life of the French Court, and I may be entitled to forgiveness if I was skeptical of any man's disinterestedness of purpose. 'Twas not the way with those with whom I had been familiar.

"Go on," said Juggins coldly to the watchman, withdrawing his attention from me.

"Why, worshipful sir, there is no more to say. It is just that I thought, the attack being made upon you, a well-known citizen, it might have been——"

"And how should I know this person of whom you speak?"

"Why, sir, that I can not——"

"Be about your duties, sirrah," interrupted Master Juggins, "and pester me no longer."

The captain stumped off to where his faithful band awaited him, the several curious-minded citizens who had listened to the altercation from the vantage-point of their bedroom windows retired to resume their slumbers, and Master Juggins strode back to my side.

"Is your name Ormerod?" he asked.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I am Harry Ormerod, once a captain of foot under the Duke of Berwick; and I formerly had the honor to be chamberlain to the man whom some people call King James the Third."

"You are a Papist?"

"No, sir."

"But you are a rebel, a conspirator against the Crown?"

"I do not expect you to believe me, of course," I answered as lightly as I could, "but I am not a rebel—in spirit or intent at any rate—and I am not conspiring against the Crown at this moment—although I have done so in the past—and I am at this moment a fugitive from justice."

"Humph," said Master Juggins thoughtfully.

He stood there in the middle of the alley, caressing his shaven chin, heedless of the thin trickle of blood that flowed from the wound in the flesh of his left arm.

"Ormerod," he murmured. "Harry Ormerod. But surely—of course—why, you are Ormerod of Foxcroft in Dorset."

I shook my head sadly.

"No, my friend; if you know that story you must know that I *was* Ormerod of Foxcroft House."

Master Juggins was suddenly all animation.

"I know it well," he returned. "You and Charles, your elder brother, were both out in the '19. Charles died in

Scotland, and you escaped with the remnants of the expedition to France."

"And Foxcroft House was sequestrated to the Crown," I amended bitterly.

"The Hampshire branch have it now," went on Master Juggins. "They toadied it through the Pelhams."

"Yes, —— them!"

I had forgotten my surroundings, forgotten the dingy cobbles of Mincing Lane, forgotten the strange circumstances under which I had met this strange person who seemed so intimately versed in my family history. My thoughts were back for the moment in the soft green Dorset countryside of my boyhood. I lived over again the brave days at Foxcroft when Charles had been master and I his lieutenant. But the moment passed, the memories faded, and my eyes saw again the drab buildings of the alley and the odd figure of my deliverer—whom I had first delivered.

"And you, sir," I said. "May I ask how it happens you know so much concerning the fortunes of a plain Dorset family?"

He seemed not to hear me, standing there in a brown study, and I spoke to him again sharply.

"Yes, yes; I heard," he answered, almost impatiently. "I was— But this is no place for discussion. Come with me to my house. I live in Holborn, not many minutes' walk from here."

Some trace of my feelings must have been revealed in my attitude—my face he could not have seen in the darkness—for he continued:

"You need not fear me, Master Ormerod. I mean you no harm. I could not do harm to your father's son."

"But you?" I asked. "Who are you, sir?"

He chuckled dryly.

"You know my name," he answered, "and you heard the watch acknowledge my civic dignity. For the rest—if you have spent much time in Dorset you should know a Dorset voice."

"I do that," I assented heartily, "and 'tis grateful to my ears."

"Then be content with that, sir, for a few minutes. Come, let us be on our way. I have reasons for not wishing to invite a second attack upon us."

He set off at a great pace, his head buried in his cloak collar, and I walked beside him, puzzled exceedingly.

II

SMALL TALK AND MULLED ALE

TEN minutes later we stopped before a tall, gabled house of brick and timber on the near side of Holborn. My companion produced a key from his person and unlocked a heavy door which opened upon a staircase leading to the second story. The first floor was occupied by a shop. Over the window was hung a small stuffed animal, who seemed to be attempting to climb the front wall as the wind swayed him to and fro.

"Enter, Master Ormerod," said Juggins. "You are right welcome. I hope you have none of the country gentleman's scorn for the home of an honest merchant."

"A beggar must not be a chooser," I answered. "But if I were not indebted to you for my liberty I should still be glad to visit a Dorset man who knows how to fight and who remembers the woods of Foxcroft."

"Well spoken," applauded Juggins as he fastened the door behind us and lit the candle in a lantern which was ready on a shelf in the vestibule at the foot of the stairs. "So I might have expected your father's son to speak."

"That is the second time you have called me 'my father's son,'" I said. "Prithee, Master Juggins, had you acquaintance with my father?"

"Bide, bide," he replied enigmatically. "We shall settle all that anon. After you, sir."

And he ushered me up the stairs, which were hung with the skins of many kinds of animals, some of which I did not even know. At intervals, too, were suspended various

savage weapons—bows, arrows and clubs—gaily painted and decorated with feathers.

The stairs gave upon a large hall, similarly decorated, and through this we passed into a comfortable chamber which stretched across the front of the house. At one side blazed a warm fire under a massive chimney-piece; candelabra shed a soft glow over thick rugs and skins, polished furniture and well-filled shelves along the walls.

Master Juggins relieved me of my cloak and hat and motioned to a deep chair in front of the fire.

"Rest yourself, Master Ormerod. Presently we shall have provender for the inner man as well."

"But your arm?" I suggested, pointing to the bloody stains on his coat sleeve. "I am not unskilled in such matters, if——"

"I doubt not, sir; but I have one at hand, I make bold to say, has forgotten more than you ever learned of cures and simples."

He went to the door by which we had entered and clapped his hands.

"Ho, Goody! Art abed after all?"

"Abed? Abed?" answered a thin, old voice that was inexpressibly sweet, with a Dorset burr that made Master Robert's sound like the twang of a Londoner. "The lad is mad! Gadding around at all hours of the night; aye, sparking in his old age, I'll be bound, with never a thought to his granny at home or the worries he pours on her head. Abed? says he. When did I ever feel the sheets, and not knowing he was warm and safe and his posset-cup where it belongs—which is in his stomach? Abed? Didst ever find——"

She stepped into the room, a quaint little figure in hodden-gray, a dainty cap perched on her wispy white hair, her brown eyes gleaming in the candle-light, the criss-crossed wrinkles of her cheeks shining like a network of fine lace. In her hands she held a tray supporting a steaming flagon and divers covered dishes of pewterware.

Juggins favored me with a humorous glance.

"Sure, I grow more troublesome year by year, granny," he said as she paused at sight of me. "Here I am come home later than ever, bringing a guest with me."

But she made no answer, and as I looked closer at her I saw that she had perceived the blood on his sleeve. She tottered in her tracks, and I jumped to take the tray from her hands. But she regained her self-command, waved me away with a nod of her head and stepped quickly across the chamber to a table by the fire.

In an instant she was at Master Juggins' side and had stripped the coat off his arm and shoulder. Then she stepped back with a sigh of relief, and for the second time looked at me.

" 'Tis nothing, after all," she said. "But ever since he came back from those years amongst the savages when I had thought him dead a score of times and——"

She broke off to glance swiftly at Juggins' face.

"Who did it? Was it——"

She hesitated, and he answered before she could continue:

"Aye; it was he, granny, or minions hired by him. But enough of that for the present. You have not spoken to our guest. Who think you he is?"

"Whoever he may be, if he helped you in danger, Robert, he is a good lad and we owe him thanks."

She swept me a stately curtsey such as might have graced a court ball at Versailles.

"No, the boot is on the other leg," I protested. " 'Tis I who owe gratitude to Master Juggins, for he has taken me in out of the cold and the fog—and worse dangers perhaps."

"Poor young gentleman," she said softly. "For you are gentle, young sir. I did not live my youth in gentlefolks' houses for naught, and I can see gentility when it comes before my eyes, old though they be."

"You have not asked his name," suggested Master Juggins.

She looked at us inquiringly.

"'Tis Master Ormerod."

"Ormerod? Not——"

"Aye; Master Harry."

"But he is in France!"

"Nay; he is here."

"But——"

She drew closer, and studied my features under the candles that shone from the mantel-shelf.

"Is he in danger?" she asked breathlessly.

"The watch were after him when he came to my rescue," replied Juggins.

"Yet he came."

She patted my cheek with her hand.

"That was a deed which you need never be shamed of, Master Ormerod, and you shall win free to safety, whatever it may be or wherever, if Robert and I have any wits between us."

"But, granny," protested Juggins, "he is a rebel. He has just landed from France on a mission against the Crown."

"A rebel? Against the Crown?"

Her eyes flared.

"Tut! A likely tale! And what if he has? Is he not an Ormerod? His father's son?"

She wheeled around upon me.

"Your father was Sidney Ormerod?"

"Yes," I assented dazedly.

"Are you in truth a rebel?" she demanded without giving me time to catch my breath.

"Faith, I was one."

"But are you one now?"

"Not in my own heart; but the Bow Street runners think otherwise."

"A fig for them!" she cried. "Men have little enough sense, and when you place 'em in authority they grow imbecile. Sit yourself down again, Master Ormerod, the while I set a bandage about this arm of Robert's, and then

you shall have a draft of mulled ale and a dish of deviled bones and thereafterward a bed with sheets that have lain in Dorset lavender. Hath it a welcome sound to you?"

The tears came into my eyes.

"I am happier this night than I have been any time since Charles and I left Foxcroft," I said. "But pray tell me why you two, who are strangers to me, should be so interested in an outcast?"

"He does not know?" exclaimed the little old lady.

"I have told him nothing," said Juggins, smiling.

"Tut, tut," she rebuked him. "Was it well to be tight-mouthed with an Ormerod?"

"I found him in the fog out there—or rather he found me," answered Juggins humorously. "And I did not know he was this side of St. Germain."

"Well, 'tis time enough he knew he was amongst the right sort of friends," the little lady said, her fingers all the time busied in adjusting bandages to the wounded arm. "You are too young, Master Ormerod, to remember old Peter Juggins——"

A light burst upon my addled wits.

"Why, of course!" I cried. "He was steward under my father, and in his father's time before him! But you?"

"Peter was my husband," she said simply. "Robert here is our grandson. As I said, sir, it was all too long ago for you to remember; but when Peter died your father offered his place to Robert. Robert would have none of it. He had the wandering bee in his bonnet. He was young, and he must see the world. He would make his fortune, too. No life as an estate steward for him."

"And wise I was, too, granny," interjected Master Juggins. "Even you will grant that now."

"Be not too elevated by your good fortune," she retorted. "Had you followed your grandfather at Foxcroft your counsel might have restrained Master Harry and his brother from their madness——"

"I wish it might have," I said bitterly, thinking of

Charles' lonely grave on a mist-draped hillside in the Scotch Highlands.

"But in that case," Master Juggins gravely pointed out, "you would not have been at hand to rescue me tonight."

"Nor would you have been getting yourself mixed into intrigues which would place you in fear of assassination," she snapped. "Have done with your foolery, Robert. Master Ormerod knows naught of his father's kindness to you."

"He shall have earnest enough of it anon," returned Juggins heartily. "But do you go on, granny. You make a brave tale-teller."

She tweaked him by the ear as if he had been a small lad, gave a final pat to the neat bandage she had fastened over his wound and continued:

"Many a gentleman would have taken in bad part such an answer to an offer made in kindness, Master Ormerod. But not your father. No, after trying all he could by fair means to dissuade Robert from his course, he asked where his fancies drifted, and then supplied him with money for the voyage to the Western Plantations and to enable him to secure a start when he entered the wilderness."

"Granny still has the Londoner's idea of New York Province," explained Juggins humorously. " 'Tis a wilderness in the Western Plantations. And in New York, which has grown a fine, thriving town since we wrested it from the Dutch, they regard England as a welcome market for furs over against the side of Europe."

" 'Tis north of the Virginias and this side of the French settlements in Canada, is it not?" I asked, more in politeness than in interest.

"Aye, Master Ormerod; and you could drop all of England and Scotland and Wales into it, and then go out and win new lands from the savages if you felt overcrowded."

"Y'are driving beside the point, Robert," declared the little old lady with round displeasure. "Would you seek

to belittle the generosity of Master Ormerod's father? No? Then have done."

She turned to me.

"Indeed," she added, " 'tis as I have told you, sir; we are greatly indebted to you. All that you see here we owe to your father's kindness. 'Twas that permitted Robert to go overseas and to set himself up as a fur-trader there and afterwards to return and establish his business down-stairs, which hath grown so that it is more than he can handle—aye, and to become in good time, as he has, Warden of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Traders to the Western Plantations. All of it, I say, we owe to you."

"All of it, granny," reaffirmed Master Juggins himself. "Y'have not made it one whit too strong for me. But now, look you, Goody, the hour is late for old folks——"

"You are not so young yourself, Robert," she remarked tartly.

"Nay, granny dear, I do not seek the last word with you," he laughed. " 'Tis only that I would find out before we sleep how I may be of aid to Master Ormerod."

"Aid?" quoth she. "All that we have in the world is his, if he wants it; aye, the clothes off our backs."

She swept me another curtsey, deeper than ever—just such a one, I fancy, as she made to my mother when she brought her the housekeeper's keys.

"Good night to you, Master Ormerod. And remember, this house, poor though it be for your father's son, is to be your home until you have a better."

I rose and bowed my acknowledgments, but I could not speak. My heart was too full. Here in this bleak, unfriendly London, which had greeted me with suspicion and persecution, I had found friendship and assistance. My fortunes, at ebb an hour before, now seemed about to flow toward a happier future. It was almost too good to believe.

"I have no claim upon you, Master Juggins," I exclaimed as the door closed behind his grandmother. "Remember that. And let me not imperil for one moment two friends

of my father, who revere his memory as I had not supposed any did, save myself."

He pushed me down into my chair by the fire.

"There is no question of claim, sir. 'Tis a privilege. Now do you set this glass to your lips. How tastes it?"

"Most excellent. In France they must spice their mulled drinks to make them palatable. No need to add aught to good, ripe English ale."

"You have not lost the tongue of an Englishman, Master Ormerod, and for that let us be thankful. Aye, 'tis a crotchet of mine to drink a posset of ale, fetched from a brewer in Dorset whose ways are known to me, each night before I rest. It settles the digestion—although my friends the savages in North America do protest that naught is necessary upon retiring save a long drink of clear, cold water."

"You have fought hard for the comfort I see around me?" I suggested.

"Aye, but we shall have time anon to speak of that. Do you tell me now of your present plight. Fear not to be frank with me, Master Ormerod. I do not mix in politics. I am none of your red-hot loyalists who would hang a man because he remarks that our worthy King is Hanoverian by birth. But on the other hand I'll have naught to do with these plotters who fume over the exiled Stuarts.

"The Stuarts went, sir, because they over-taxed the forbearance of a long-suffering people. They might have returned ere this, as you know, had they possessed the good sense to appreciate what their whilom people required. But they lacked that good sense, Master Ormerod, and with all deference I say to you they will never return unless they learn that lesson—and abjure Popery—very soon."

I leaned forward in my chair and interrupted him, the words bubbling from my lips.

"I could not have put neater my own feelings, Master Juggins. When I was a lad not yet of age I risked all I had for the Stuart cause. What came of it? A life of

exile that might have ruined me, as it has many a better man. My family's estate was sequestrated; my outlawry was proclaimed. I have no place to lay my head, save it be by the bounty of a foreigner.

"Have I secured any moral satisfaction by these sacrifices? At first I thought I had.

"They told me it was all for the Good Cause, the Cause that some day must triumph. The man you call the Pretender—it irks my lips to brand him so, despite how I have suffered in his name—took me by the hand, made me a chamberlain at his trumpery Court. I received a commission to fight under an English prince in foreign wars, mayhap against my own land. 'Tis only accident has averted that so far.

"But when I looked closer I found that I had done nothing for my country. For this prince, whom some men call King and some Pretender, yes. But for my country, nothing.

"This made me think the harder, Master Juggins. At the beginning I had taken zest in the plots and plans which were aimed to bring about his restoration to power.

"But the longer I studied them the more insincere they became. I found my leader a catspaw of foreigners, used to undermine England's prestige. His spies were in the pay of Papists. His aims were not the good of England, but his own aggrandizement, the winning back of my country to the Pope, the furthering of France's ambitions."

Master Juggins reached over and smote me on the knee.

"Hast learned that, lad? Why, then, there's no more loyal Englishman in London!"

"So you think," I answered. "So I think. But hear me out. I brought myself to abandon my friends in France, the only friends I had. I told my feelings to a certain great gentleman who handles affairs at St. Germain. He cursed me for a turncoat, would have ordered his lackeys to flog me from the palace. I left him—in disgrace. The

doors of my friends were closed to me. I thought I would make my way to England and begin a new life.

"So I applied to the English ambassador for a passport. He laughed at me. Did I think he was so innocent as to be blinded by such transparent trickery? Nay, the Pretender must seek otherwhere for means to plant a fresh spy in England. In desperation then I sold a miniature of my mother's——"

Master Juggins held up his hand.

"Where?" he asked eagerly.

"How?" I replied, not understanding.

"Where sold you this miniature? To what dealer?"

"'Twas a Jew named Levy close by the Quai de l'Horloge,"

"Good," he said with satisfaction. "It shall be recovered."

"But, Master Juggins——"

"Tush, sir," he brushed my objection aside. "'Tis naught. Some day you shall refund the money, if you wish. But I would not have you lose the miniature. I loved your lady mother, if I may say so."

I pressed his hand, and struggled for words to answer. But he would have none, and insisted that I continue my story.

"So you secured funds?" he said. "And next?"

"I bought passage from a smuggler of Dieppe, who landed me three weeks since in Sussex. I made my way to Dorset, hoping to find old friends who would help me to gain a pardon; but in Dorchester High Street I was recognized by one of my cousins who now hold Foxcroft House, and he raised a hue and cry after me, fearing no doubt that I sought to regain the estate.

"Since then I have been hunted like a beast. My last shilling was spent this morning. Tomorrow, had I escaped so long, I planned to sell my sword, and if all else failed to seek a press-gang."

"Let us thank God you heard my cries," said Juggins earnestly.

He rose from his chair, a stout, square-built man with a shrewd, weather-beaten face and a manner of authority, despite the simplicity of his demeanor and attire.

"I do," I said, "and with no lack of reverence, my friend, I also thank you."

He gave me a keen look.

"You call me friend. Do you mean the word?"

"Why not?"

"I was your father's servant," he said, and he said it so that the words were at once proud and humble.

I caught his hand in mine.

"You were his friend, too; and who am I, an outlaw without name or fortune, to set myself above a man who has prospered like you through the diligence of his own hands and brains?"

Master Juggins drew a deep breath and wrung my hand hard.

"You'll do, lad," he said. "My help would have been yours on any terms. But you have made it a glad privilege for me to help you. Doubt not we shall find a way.

"Now get you to bed. I shall have somewhat to say to you on the morrow."

III

BEFORE THE LORDS OF TRADE

HOW long I might have slept I know not, but the pallid sun that strove to pierce the fog-reek proclaimed high noon when Master Juggins waked me. He would not listen to my protestations of regret, but directed my attention to the pile of clothes he carried over his arm.

"See, we shall make a 'prentice lad of you," he said. "I have a youth downstairs of about your build, and these are his Sunday clothes."

"But what will he do?" I asked.

"Why, purchase new gear with a right merry heart."

"And must I in truth wear these?" I demanded with some disgust as I felt their coarseness of texture.

"Aye, indeed, Master Harry."

His tone sobered.

"I have been abroad since rising," he continued, "and forgive me if I say 'twas well for you we met last night. Your cousin is come up to London, frantic with fear lest you should succeed in replacing him, and he hath pulled wires right and left, so that all are convinced you are here for no less a purpose than the murder of the King."

I cursed with a fluency conferred by two languages.

"There is no hope of a pardon now," proceeded Juggins. "I am not altogether without influence, and I had hoped— But 'tis doubly hopeless. If you were Scots or Irish, it might be done. But few of the English gentry besides you and Master Charles rose in the '19. You are a marked

man, and with your cousin's interest against you 'twill be impossible even to gain a hearing for you."

"There is naught to do, then, save go back to France and the friends who now distrust me," I said bitterly.

"Never say so," remonstrated Master Juggins with energy. "I have an idea of another course which may commend itself to you. Come, don these poor garments, which will none the less cloak you with safety, and join me in granny's morningroom."

The coffee which the old lady poured us in blue-bordered china bowls put new life and hope in me. I settled back in my chair, heedless of my baggy breeches and woolen stockings, and puffed at the long clay pipe which Juggins had filled for me.

Granny Juggins gave me an approving pat on the shoulder.

"That is well, Master Harry. Worry never solved any difficulty. And now I must be going about my duties; but remember that what Robert tells you hath my endorsement."

"And what is that?" I inquired in some curiosity as the door closed behind her.

He smoked in silence for several moments.

"I am resolved to take you fully into my confidence, Master Harry," he began at last, "and I should not do so if I doubted your discretion."

"I shall strive to justify your trust," I said.

"No doubt. 'Tis a delicate matter."

He fell silent again.

"Did it not seem strange to you that such an assault as you saw last night should have been made upon an ordinary merchant?" he asked suddenly.

"I thought they meant robbery."

"Robbery? They never made a demand upon me. They meant murder."

"That is strange," I conceded.

"The truth is, lad," he went on, "I am at grips with a

deadly enemy. 'Tis a curious story, concerned with high politics, great spoils of trade, intrigues of Church and State—mayhap the future of a continent. And as it happens Robert Juggins is at the hub of it.

"Do you think you would like to play a hand—on England's behalf and to checkmate the very foreign influences which sickened you of the Jacobite cause? There are reasons why I think you might be of aid to me. I need a strong arm combined with an agile mind, a mind used to French ways and the French tongue."

I would have answered, but he checked me.

"If you accept you must be prepared to fight your old friends, for the enemy I have spoken of is Jacobite at heart and works under cover for the return of the Pretender through the weakening of England and the paramount influence of France. Remember that before you commit yourself.

"You must be prepared for no half-way measures. You have seen how my enemy fights. He does not stop at assassination. If you meet him weakly you will only insure your own death. On the other hand, if your efforts are successful you will have earned gratitude from the Government which should secure your pardon."

"Even as I told you last night, Master Juggins, I am for England now," I answered. "If such a plot as you speak of is under way, then surely 'tis for loyal Englishmen to thwart it. Count me with you, I pray."

"I will," he said quietly. "Now hark to these facts. At the instance of myself and my associates in the Company of Merchant Traders to the Western Plantations, the Provincial Government of New York several years ago secured the royal assent to a law prohibiting the sale of Indian trading-goods to the French in Canada.

"Our object was twofold. The best and cheapest trading-goods are manufactured in England. If we can keep them to ourselves and compel the French to use more costly and less durable goods made on the Continent we shall be able

to underbid them with the Indians. So the fur-trade will come more and more into our hands."

"Is that so important?" I asked curiously.

"'Tis all-important, lad."

Juggins leaned forward and tapped me on the knee.

"North America," he went on, "is the richest land in all the world—how rich it is or how vast no man knows. 'Twill require centuries to exploit it. Since first we colonized there we have contended with France, not only for further power, but for the actual right to breath. Our two countries can not agree to divide this domain, limitless though it be. Sooner or later one must oust the other."

"But the fur-trade?" I insisted, my curiosity now fully aroused.

"Aye; the fur-trade is the key to it all. The English settled along the more southerly seaboard, with fertile lands, have devoted themselves mainly to farming. The French in Canada, with an inclement climate, have been driven to spread out their settlements in order to find room for subsistence. The English power is limited, but compact; the French is spread all around us. Both nations supplement their farming by trading with the savages for furs, and these furs are the principal export from New York to England.

"I said the fur-trade was the key. It is so, because neither the French nor we are yet sufficiently powerful to ignore the strength of the Indian tribes. The fur-trade is the source of the savages for securing trade-goods. They will be bound closest to the country which gives them the best terms. If we can deprive the French of the ability to buy their goods as cheaply as we do, then we shall be able to trade to better advantage with the Indians and so increase their friendship for us. At the same time the volume of the provincial trade will be increased."

"I see," I answered. "But you spoke before of a two-fold object in depriving the French of the right to obtain trade-goods through New York?"

"So I did, and that brings me to the enemy whom I mentioned. Heard you ever in Paris of one Murray—Andrew Murray?"

I shook my head.

"He hath connections with the French, and, too, with the Jacobites; but they would be well covered, no doubt. Murray owns the Provincial Fur Company of New York, which is the largest of all the trading agencies. He hath set himself deliberately to drive out of existence all the independent traders and secure the entire trade for himself. The trade with the French in Canada likewise is in his hands.

"Before the Provincial Government passed the prohibitive law of which I spoke, he carried on this trade openly, and the French traders, helped by a government subsidy, more often than not underbid our traders—using English goods, mind you, for the purpose. And then the French traders would sell their skins in the London market at a lower price than our own traders could afford to charge.

"After the passage of the law, in spite of efforts to enforce it, Murray contrived to build up a clandestine means of shipping goods to Canada, and while the French are more pressed for cheap trade-goods than they were, nevertheless they are better off than they should be, and our traders are put at a disadvantage. Now the time for which the law was passed is expired, and the Provincial Government hath enacted it again. It comes up this afternoon before the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, when Murray will petition for its rejection."

"But surely he will lose," I objected.

Juggins shook his head.

"I fear not. The best we can hope for is a compromise."

"Yet you say he is in alliance with the French and the Jacobites!"

"I say that, Master Harry, but I can not prove it. Remember, even you, who have recently come from St. Germain, had never heard of him. Moreover, he is hand in

glove with the Pelhams and all the corrupt officials in Whitehall. He hath buttered many a grasping hand, and if he can secure his operations a few years longer he will have laid the groundwork for England's overthrow in the New World.

"I leave to your imagination the effect upon our people at home of a disastrous war with France at this juncture. King George is scarce settled on his throne, and so good an excuse would pave the way for the Stuarts' return."

"And Murray?"

"So ambitious a man as he must have his object in view. He could ask a dukedom—whatever he willed."

"Yes, that is true," I assented. "'Tis a dangerous plot."

Juggins looked at me keenly.

"You are still desirious to join in thwarting it?"

"More so than ever. But I see not how I can be of service to you."

"If the Lords of Trade have received the orders I expect, then you can be of great service to me and to your country. For myself, I stand in no worse plight than the loss of some small sums of money, which I can do without at need. My interest is impersonal, Master Harry, and 'tis because he knows it to be so that Murray attempted my life last night."

"Let me call him out," I urged impetuously.

Juggins laughed.

"Then would you climb Tower Hill in short order. No, lad, you are an humble 'prentice to Master Robert Juggins."

He rose.

"Come, you shall have your first lesson. You may attend me to the hearing before the Lords of Trade, and you shall carry me a bag of papers rather than a sword."

"But so I shall not aid you," I demurred.

"Aye, but you shall. I wish you to observe what passes at the hearing, and to study Murray. For if he wins his stay, as I fear he will, then it is my purpose to send you

to New York for such evidence as will wreck his conspiracy."

"And I will go gladly," I said, a thrill of exultation in my heart at the bare thought of a man's part to play.

"I would I might go with you," sighed Juggins. "But I am old and fat, and granny can ill spare me. No, it calls for youth and strength. But a truce to talk. Let us to Whitehall."

He collected some documents and maps, placed them in a green string-bag and gave it to me to carry.

"And remember," he cautioned me at the door, "do you keep at least two paces behind me. Speak only when I speak to you and hold your head low and your shoulders stooped. Slouch, if you can. If any address you look stupidly at them and mumble an answer. I will explain that you are slow-witted."

But none of the men who stopped Master Juggins during our walk deigned to notice the humble 'prentice lad who followed him. I avoided all scrutiny and reached Whitehall with considerable more self-confidence than I had started with.

The Lords of Trade sat in a lofty chamber of a dirty, gray stone building over against the river. At one end was a dais with a long, closed-in desk across it. Behind this nodded my lords in periwigged majesty, five of them, two fat and pompous, one small and birdlike, one tall and cadaverous and one who looked like nothing at all.

"That is Tom Pelham," whispered Master Juggins, pointing at the last as we took our seats.

But I had already transferred my gaze to an extraordinary creature who stood by a window on the opposite side of the room. It was a black man, squat and enormously broad, whose long, powerful arms reached almost to the floor. He had a square, woolly head, with little, pig-eyes that were studying the people in the room with a kind of animal cunning.

As I watched him, fascinated, his eyes found my face

and he surveyed me, apparently without any human interest whatsoever, but as a wild beast might consider a fat stag when too full to care about a kill. He was dressed in a bright-red livery coat with gold lace, and the cocked hat which he held was covered with silver embroidery.

I felt Juggins tugging at my arm.

"Do you see him?" he whispered.

I shuddered involuntarily, whilst the beady, pig-eyes gloated over me.

"I never saw anything so hideous in my life," I answered.

Juggins laughed, as his eyes followed mine.

"No, I meant not the negro. 'Twas Murray I spoke of. He sits several seats farther on."

I looked as directed and picked out a man who lounged back comfortably in a chair, talking with a group of merchants who seemed to hang on his words. He was elegantly clad, yet very quietly, rather in the fashion of a fine gentleman than a rich trader.

Though sitting, he showed himself to be a large man of massive frame. His face was dead-white in complexion, with big features, strongly marked. He wore an immense periwig in the prevailing mode, and there was about him an air of pride and self-confidence. Though he must have been middle-aged, he carried himself like a young man or a soldier.

"He is no enemy to be slighted," I said.

"No, he thrives upon opposition; but——"

A secretary rapped for order.

"To the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council," he recited from a document he held, "the humble petition and representation of Samuel Baker, Samuel Storke, Richard Janeway and others, merchants of London, trading to New York, in behalf of themselves and the rest of the persons concerned in the New York trade; which petition, having been considered by his Majesty's Council, hath been

referred, with his gracious consent, to the Right Hon. the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations."

"You will note," whispered Master Juggins in my ear, "that the name of Murray is not included in the list. That was the cleverest move he made. He appears here, not as the principal, which he is, but at the request of these merchants, who are his decoys, and ostensibly in their interest."

The secretary read on for some minutes, and then came to a stop, looking expectantly at their lordships, who promptly awoke from the naps they had been taking.

"You have heard the petition and reference of the Council read," gabbled Pelham in whining voice. "We will now hear arguments by the opposing sides. Who opens?"

There was some hesitation.

"If it pleases your lordships," spoke up a merchant in the group surrounding Murray, "we would have the opponents of the petition heard first."

"Be it so. Who appears against the petition?"

Master Juggins rose beside me. His arguments were substantially those he had used with me, bulwarked additionally by a mass of facts and statistics. He drew, too, upon several documents in the bag I carried, letters and statements from Governor Burnet of New York and other merchants of that province. When he sat down it seemed to me that no Englishman who thought of his own country's interest could resist the logic of his appeal.

There was a smattering of applause, and then the same merchant who had spoken before introduced Murray, with the remark that he had kindly consented to give his opinion, as he had recently come on a visit to London from the province of New York, where he was in residence.

"The gentleman who proceded me," began Murray, "and who, I am told, once spent some time in our province many years ago, is unfortunately laboring under a misapprehension of the situation. It is not, my lords, as though we had the misfortune to be at war with France. Through the grace

of God, the two countries have now been for some years at peace with one another, and their subjects in the New World have striven not to be behind-hand in drawing closer the bonds of trade which in themselves are the best preventative of war."

"Hear, hear," cried his supporters.

"There is no difficulty about this matter which we are discussing," he resumed. "We manufacture in this country more goods of a certain kind than we can consume ourselves. These goods are in great demand amongst the savage tribes which inhabit the interior of North America.

"Both the French and our own traders have use for these goods in the fur-trade, which is growing to be of increasing worth to the London merchants. The French, by reason of their location on the shores of the Great Lakes, which stretch like inland seas across our wilderness, have access to the trade of many tribes which we do not reach.

"If we withhold from the French the goods they require for trading with these tribes they will seek them from the manufacturers of the Low Countries and Germany. Thus our merchants at home will be deprived of a profitable trade, and we provincials will not be bettered. Also, the supply of furs for the London market, much of which comes from the French posts, will be reduced. It seems to me, your lordships, that this prohibitory legislation will only have crippling effects upon trade and hinder the good relations between France and England and their colonies."

He said much more in the same vein, whilst Juggins twisted uneasily in his seat and the attending merchants and even their sleepy lordships hung upon his words. For he was a ready speaker. When he sat down there was hearty applause and Pelham nodded his head as if to say—

"Well done."

But our opponents were not through with us. The merchant who acted as master of ceremonies caused a start of surprize, in which I joined, by bringing forward a hand-

somely dressed gentleman, whose laced coat and gold-hilted sword showed conspicuously in such drab surroundings.

'Twas Raoul de Veulle; yes, Raoul de Veulle, whose mad exploits and escapades, love-affairs and gambling-debts, had kept all Paris gossiping these past three years and had just driven him into an exile, the facts concerning which had been mysteriously secret. I had known de Veulle well—as a dim star of restricted orbit may know a bright planetary light whose radiance reaches beyond his immediate universe. Once, in fact, we had come together, clashed over a question of honor in which—But I will tell of that in its place.

Now de Veulle stood before us, his handsome face smiling, bowing low before their interested lordships. In charming, broken English he repeated his brief message. He had been requested by his Excellency the French ambassador to appear in this matter in answer to a plea offered by the petitioners to the ambassador for corroborative testimony to the justice of their assertions from a responsible French source.

He himself—he shrugged apologetically—as it happened was Canadian-born; he was just starting upon his way to take up an appointment in the Canadian Government. He ventured to say he knew whereof he spoke. He agreed unhesitatingly with what Monsieur Murray had stated. On behalf of the French Government and of the Canadian authorities he begged to say that such legislation as New York wished to have perpetuated would have most unhealthy effects upon the trade and politics of their two countries. He thanked their lordships for their forbearance, made a second courtly bow and withdrew.

Master Juggins sprang to his feet, his honest face aflush.

"Many of the assertions of Master Murray and——"

Pelham waved him to his seat.

"We have heard enough," pronounced the whining voice. "You have no other first-hand witnesses from overseas?"

"No, your lordships," admitted Juggins reluctantly.

"Then further talk is fruitless," he went on, while his colleagues nodded their sleepy assent. "We are agreed that there seems to be some difference of opinion concerning this measure. Were it not for the fact that his Majesty's Governor of New York appears to favor the bill, we should consider the case made out against it unanswerable. But in view of Governor Burnet's approval we are resolved that the matter shall be referred back to him with a request for a full report upon the issues raised, and pending the receipt of this report and a decision being reached his Majesty's Government will not take action in the premises.

"Good relations with the Government of his Most Catholic Majesty must be preserved, and the utmost care should be maintained that no injustice be done, however unwittingly, to any of the subjects of the two countries.

"What is the next case for consideration?"

The petitioners, much gratified, flocked around Murray and his ape-like servant, and I followed Master Juggins from the chamber and out into Whitehall.

"The scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "But 'twas no more than I had expected."

"And what will happen next?" I asked.

"If I know Governor Burnet as well as I think I do, Murray and his French friends will draw slight comfort from their triumph today."

"Why? What can he do?"

"Nothing official, 'tis true; but remember he is three thousand miles from London and therefore able to think for himself. With you to help him——"

I felt something brush against my coat sleeve and looked around. I had just time to see the back of a gaudy red coat and a woolly black head, crowned by an ornate cocked hat, disappearing in the crowd.

"Do you see?" I said.

"Aye," responded Juggins grimly; "I might have known it. Well, 'tis a lesson in time. We will not forget it."

IV

FIVE BERTHS ON THE *NEW VENTURE*

WE TURNED from Whitehall into the crowded Strand.

"Murray will figure that this delay gives him time to bribe and buy his will, either in Governor Burnet's Council or in the Government here," continued Master Juggins, with a watchful eye against the return of the spy. "At the worst he will think that he should be able to withstand the law's execution for several years, and in that time much may be done—aye, much may be done, and in more than one way." he concluded grimly.

"Then doubtless Murray will send at once a swift messenger to New York so that his friends may set to work in his interest," I suggested.

Juggins stopped abruptly in the center of the footway.

"No, he will go himself. 'Tis too important for trusting to another. That was well thought of, Master Harry. We must not let him get ahead of us. You must sail on the first passage available. Do you follow me."

And he started off as fast as his legs could carry him, bumping and prodding his person against all who did not move from his path.

"Whither are we bound now?" I panted.

"To Master Lloyd's Coffee-House, where the ship-owners resort for trade. We shall find news of the sailings there."

We followed the Strand past Temple Bar into Fleet Street, and so trod a path into the labyrinth of the City—that congested hive of humanity whence the mighty energies

of England radiated in a constant struggle for control of the world's arteries of trade. Used though I was to the busy life of Paris, I was amazed by the throngs of people hurrying to and fro, the concentration of effort that was everywhere visible, the numbers of different races represented on the sidewalks, the signs and letterings that hung over doorways and in windows, proclaiming the multiplicity of endeavors to which the merchants of the city were committed.

"Mark well what you see around you, Master Harry." Juggins instructed me. "London hath prospered under King George. Here are come traders out of Muscovy, Cathay, the further Indies, the Spanish Main, the country of the Moors, Turkey, our own Western Plantations. And here at last is Master Lloyd's Tavern."

Many men stood on the cobbles outside talking. The coffee-room and taproom also were filled. Master Juggins pushed his way through the shifting groups until he reached a burly, stout man who sat by himself at a table, sucking fragant Mocha from a bowl.

"And what will you ha', Bob Juggins?" demanded the burly man in a sulky voice.

As he spoke he pushed the bowl of coffee from him and produced a dog-eared record-book, bound in filthy sheepskin, from a pocket in the skirts of his coat.

"A good afternoon to you, Tom Jenkins," returned Juggins. "You gentry are sitting late this afternoon."

"We ha' been making up the subscriptions for the Baltic Fleet," yawend the burly man.

"And how are sailings to the Western Plantations?"

"Ameriky?"

"Aye, New York province."

"From Bristol?"

Master Juggins hesitated, then shook his head.

"No, I must have an early passage," he decided. "'Twould take too long to ride thither."

The burly man consulted his record-book.

"We ha' the ship *New Venture,* Abbot, master, sailing from Greenwich the end of the week—say, Saturday post meridian. What's your cargo?"

" 'Tis not cargo, but a man I would send on her."

Master Jenkins shook his head forebodingly.

"I fear me she's full up, Bob."

"How does that happen?"

"But yesterday we sold four places on her—and she hath limited quarters for passengers."

Juggins threw me a humorous glance.

"I'll be bound 'tis Master Murray of New York she's to carry," he declared.

"Why, that's true," admitted Jenkins. "And some Frenchy, a friend o' his."

I forgot my rôle of 'prentice lad, and shoved myself across the table.

"Not de Veulle? The Chevalier de Veulle?" I challenged him.

Jenkins looked at me with mingled amusement and indignation.

"Who's your green lad that hankers for the Frenchies so?" he asked Juggins.

My master sent me spinning to the floor.

"Mind your place, boy," he rebuked me.

Then he continued half-apologetically to Master Jenkins—

"This de Veulle put a slight upon me before the Lords of Trade, and the lad—'tis a good youth and devoted, though fresh come out of Dorset, as you may see—was most indignant on my behalf."

Jenkins blinked his eyes.

"Humph," said he.

"And now about the passage?" resumed Juggins. "I'll pay well. Sure, you can always find room for an extra man on shipboard."

"What will you pay?"

"Three guineas."

"Four," countered Jenkins in a monotonous tone.

"Four, then," agreed Juggins, "and may the extra guinea find a hole in your pocket."

The ship-owner nodded dispassionately, and made an entry in his book.

"Four guineas," he repeated.

Juggins drew the coins from a purse and clinked them on the table.

"You'll never lose a debt, will you, Tom?"

"Not if I can help it," Tom agreed.

"And is it de Veulle sails with Murray?"

"Aye; he goes on some Government mission for Canada."

"But why does he not sail from Havre in a French ship for Quecbec?"

"The St. Lawrence is frozen. There will be no French ships for Canada for two months yet."

Juggins pursed his lips in that quaint gesture of a whistle which was a characteristic trait.

"They use our goods," he muttered; "they use our rivers, our trading-posts, our people, the tribes which are friendly to us—and now they use our ships."

"Often," admitted Jenkins disinterestedly. "Since the Peace of Utrecht we ha' done a sight o' shipping business with the Frenchies."

" 'Tis to our shame," declared Master Juggins roundly.

"Why, 'tis business," answered Jenkins with his first show of interest. "Would you have a merchant reject the trade that came his way?"

"Aye, if 'twas not to his interest to accept it," rejoined Juggins.

"Show me a heathen, let alone a Frenchy, will pay a farthing more than an Englishman, and I'll show you a better customer," said the ship-owner. "Trade is trade. Leave politics to governments. If I make not my own living, will the gentry at Westminster carry my debts? I think not."

Juggins swelled with indignation.

"God help England when men like you come to rule it, Tom Jenkins!" he declared. "Good afternoon to you."

"One moment," interposed Jenkins. "You ha' not given me the name of my passenger."

"Must you have it?"

"Aye. How else shall I know whom to admit on board?"

" 'Tis this youth here."

"He who hath the interest in the Frenchy?" responded Jenkins. "Well, lad, keep your hands off him, despite his insults to your master. And what's your name?"

"Bill," I said in a voice I made as hoarse as I could.

"Bill," he repeated. " 'Tis a good plain name. But you must ha' more to it. So the custom officers will say."

" 'Tis Juggins," interposed my master. "The lad is a cousin once removed. He goes to seek employment in the New World. To tell the truth, though strong and willing, he is not overburdened with wits. But he can swing an ax as well as any one, and his muscles should bring him good hire on some wilderness farm."

"Aye," agreed Master Jenkins tonelessly.

He wrote the name carefully in his record-book, slipped it back in his coat-tails and returned to his bowl of Mocha. The sucking of his lips was the last sound I heard as we left the table.

In the street Juggins turned upon me indignantly. "Would you ruin us, Master Harry?" he demanded. "Zooks, you were like to plunge yourself into trouble by your forward manner! I'll wager Jenkins is wondering now whether you are a criminal or only a half-wit."

"Not he," I replied confidently. "He hath his four guineas, and a reasonable explanation for the receiving of it, and he will not worry about Government or the character of the man who paid him."

"Mayhap," said Juggins doubtfully. "But for your own sake, lad, mind the playing of your part till you have the Atlantic behind you. Why did you flare up over this de Veulle?"

"Because I know him."

This time 'twas Juggins who forgot our parts, for he stopped me in front of St. Paul's and grasped my arm.

"You know him? But——"

"I know him and I hate him," I answered doggedly.

"Why? What hath he done?"

"Oh, he owes me nothing. Like enough he thinks the obligation is the other way. He is one of the gallants of the Court in Paris. He came out of Canada some three years ago, and made a reputation for gambling, fickleness and daredeviltry of all kinds. I never had the money to mingle with him and his friends, but once in the Toison d'Or I heard him slur the poor young man I then served."

"James?"

"I called him King James in those days," I answered. "Yes, de Veulle was mocking the petty motley of our exiled Court, mocking it as much as anything else because he sought to humiliate the two Englishmen in the room.

" 'What is this King but a puppet figure for us to dandle in England's face?' he said 'And what are his courtiers but other puppets to dress the show?'

"His toadies all laughed. They laughed so that they did not see the other Englishman and me rise in our seats.

" 'And the most comical thing of all,' ended de Veulle, 'is to think of this Puppet King, with a Puppet Court, ruling over a Puppet England while France pulls the strings—as will surely happen some day.'

"It was then I knocked him out of his chair."

Master Juggins gripped me by the hand with a warmth that surprized me.

"Good lad!" he exclaimed. "I would have done it myself!"

"What? You are no Jacobite!"

"I am no Jacobite," he replied in some confusion, "but no more were you a Jacobite when you struck him. 'Twas for England, Master Harry; and a man's country means more than any king that ever ruled. But what came after?"

"We fought in the upper room of the Toison d'Or—de Veulle and I and a friend of his and my friend. My friend was badly wounded."

"And you?"

"I disarmed my opponent."

"Only that?" remonstrated Juggins whimsically.

"Well, I disarmed him several times. When we began to fence I found he knew little of the small-sword—remember, he had been brought up in Canada—and 'twould not have been pretty to slay a man so at my mercy. Also, to treat him as I did was more humiliating to his pride than death."

"You did well, Master Harry. But granny will be awaiting us. We must hasten."

He walked in silence until we had reached the house in Holborn.

"How comes de Veulle in London?" he asked suddenly as we climbed the stairs.

"He was in some trouble in Paris—what, I know not. The rumor was that he was ordered into exile. But if he sails for Canada, as Master Jenkins says——"

"And on the same ship with Murray," interposed Juggins excitedly, "after appearing in Murray's behalf this afternoon——"

"—then there may be more to his enterprise than the mere punishment of exile from the Court," I concluded.

" 'Tis so!" exclaimed Juggins. "Beyond doubt 'tis so. Aye, Master Harry, this will be no ordinary struggle I send you upon. And mayhap de Veulle will recognize you."

I struck him heavily on the shoulder.

"Do you think 'my father's son' will draw back on such excuse at this hour?" I said.

He laughed ruefully, and raised his hail for granny.

"Ho, Goody! Goody, hast lain abed all day? Here are two hungry forest-runners will eat your kitchen bare."

Granny tripped into the hall, a mug of bitter ale in either hand.

"I heard what you said, and Master Harry's answer," she rebuked him. "Think shame on yourself, Robert, to hint that he would hesitate before peril—and you sending him into it, too," she added somewhat illogically, I thought. "Now, do both of you drain these. 'Twill wash the taste of the streets and taverns from your mouths."

We obeyed her.

"And what luck did you have?" she demanded next.

"He leaves us Saturday," said Juggins simply.

She cried out.

"So soon! Must it be, Robert? Sure, the lad should have some respite from toil and fear!"

"If he is to go, he must go then," rejoined Juggins. " 'Twas because I felt as you did that I said what you heard, granny."

"And 'twas because he had a sound heart in him that he answered as he did," she snapped. "If he is to go, he should go, I dare say; and the greater the peril, the greater the reward. Now come with me. The meal is made ready."

She plied us with questions as we ate, demonstrating a keenness of mind that continually amazed me.

"So Master Murray hath engaged three berths on his own behalf, aside from the Frenchman," she commented. "Who could he have with him?"

"The negro servant," I hazarded.

"That is true," assented Juggins. "He is Tom, Murray's body-guard. An evil brute, by all accounts."

"But still there is a third place," insisted granny.

"Another servant?" I suggested.

Juggins shook his head.

"I have had our men watched as well as may be, but never have we seen a trace of any other follower or servant."

"Have you done aught towards securing Master Harry's equipment?" she inquired.

"No," he answered. "The less he is cumbered with the better. All he needs for forest work he can find to better advantage in New York."

"But arms?" she pressed.

"There I have somewhat will be of aid to him," he agreed.

And he went to a cupboard, from which he produced a bundle of rolled cloths. Layer after layer was unwound, and finally he drew from the wrappings a gun such as I had never seen before. It was long in the barrel, well-stocked, yet very light and handy.

"You may exclaim over it, Master Harry," remarked Juggins as he surrendered it into my admiring hands; "but you can have no idea of its value until you have seen it tested in the great forests, where a man's life depends upon the swiftness and accuracy with which he can shoot. I learned that in my own youth, and so when I returned to London I had this gun made for me by the King's own gunsmith, after plans I drew for him. There is none other like it."

"And it is for me?" I asked, delighted as a child with a new toy.

"What better use could it have?" he replied. "Oh, yes; and these go with it."

He brought from the same cupboard a shot-pouch of beaded deerskin and a powder-horn, ornamented with dull silver that would not catch the light. Also a belt of hide from which there hung in sheaths a delicately balanced hatchet and a long, broad-bladed knife.

"These you will discover no less useful than the gun," he explained, drawing the weapons from their coverings. "This which you call a hatchet is the tomahawk of the Indians, used for fighting at close quarters and for throwing. This other is the scalping-knife, and a deadly blade it is, too. You will feel them strange at first, but among my friends in New York there is a Dutchman named

Corlaer who will instruct you in the ways of the wilderness."

"You will not be letting Master Harry go upon his adventures without smoothing the path for him, will you, Robert?" interposed granny, looking up from the work-table by which she sat.

"No, indeed; he shall have letters to Governor Burnet himself, whom I met before he went overseas, and to Master Cadwalader Colden, the Governor's surveyor-general and a member of his Council, a fine, loyal gentleman with whom I have had some correspondence. They will see to him, more especially because he brings news of value to their plans; and he may be used to thwart the intrigues they struggle against."

V

THE FIFTH PASSENGER

GRANNY JUGGINS drew my face down to a level with her puckered old lips.

"God preserve you, Master Harry. No, I am not weeping. 'Tis— No matter. Remember always that so long as my heart beats there is room in it for you— and forget not that your mother would be hungry for pride in you if she were but with us."

She drew away anxiously.

"You do not mind that I say that, who was her servant?"

I swept her into my arms.

"I love you for it, granny. Never shall I forget your kindness and the welcome you gave to the stranger from the night."

She kissed me tenderly.

"I am an old woman, Master Harry," she said, "and I may not live to see it; but the day will come when you will be no longer a fugitive from justice. So be not disheartened."

"And how could I be disheartened," I demanded, as I set her down, "with two friends such as I may boast of?"

There was a mist before my eyes, and I was not sorry when Juggins broke in upon our farewells.

"Come, come," says he. "You will be unmanning the lad, granny——"

" 'Tis to his credit he hath so much sentiment," she returned, wiping clear her eyes with a shaky hand. "But 'tis time he went, Robert."

"Aye, John Waterman will be waiting us at the Temple Stairs, and we have little time to spare if we are to get aboard before the other passengers. This de Veulle would recognize him, I fear, even in his disguise."

I could not forbear a grimace at the reference to my get-up, a linsey-woolsey shirt, with homespun jacket and breeches and a bobbed scratch-wig, the whole designed to give me a rustic appearance, which there can be no doubt that it did.

"Never mind, Master Harry," admonished Juggins as he clapped an ugly beaver of ancient style upon my head. "In New York you will rig yourself in forest-runner's garb, and forget that you ever played the bumpkin. Give granny a last kiss, and——"

She flew at me, light as a bird; her arms clasped momentarily about my neck; I felt her kiss on my cheek; and then she was gone from the room. I may as well say here that I never saw her again, although many a night as I lay under the stars I was to remember her quaint ways, her sweet, shrill voice and loving smile.

But I had no opportunity for such thoughts as Juggins and I hurried through the streets toward the river, where a wherry was awaiting us. All the way he kept up a running fire of last-minute advice and instructions.

"Guard well the letters I have given you, the one to Corlaer no less than those to Governor Burnet and Master Colden. Corlaer, though he be only a rude, unlettered woodsman, is none the less of importance in the wilderness country. He hath the confidence of the Indians of the Six Nations, a mighty tribe, or rather confederacy of tribes, Master Harry. They were recently but five nations in their league, but the Tuscaroras, after troubles with the colonists in the Carolinas, came north several years ago and were accepted at the Council-Fire at Onondaga."

"Are they friendly to Murray?" I asked as we reached the river and climbed aboard the wherry.

"Nay, I think not. But you will learn beyond question

in New York. I have writ as strongly as a man may to Governor Burnet, but I would have you say to him all that you can think of to urge him to a vigorous course. 'Tis no hour for half-way measures. We must crush Murray once and for all. If legal measures may not suffice, then let us go without the bounds of the law."

We came presently to Greenwich reach, and steered a passage through the river traffic to the side of the *New Venture,* a slovenly craft of fair burthen, whose loose rope-ends and frazzled rigging emphasized the confusion on her decks.

Master Abbot, her captain, a melancholy man in a tar-stained coat, met us at the rail.

"The young man is not sure of himself afloat, and would seek his berth," said Master Juggins, after the preliminaries had been passed.

"As he pleases," agreed Captain Abbot indifferently "Y'are the first aboard, lad, and may choose your quarters."

"What choice have I?"

"Why, you may bunk with the second mate or one of the other passengers. But no," he corrected himself; "I should have said with one of two of the other passengers. The lady hath a cabin to herself."

"The lady!" I exclaimed.

Master Juggins pursed his lips in a soundless whistle.

"So you carry a lady," he commented.

"Aye," replied Abbot, lapsing into his customary manner of indifference, "and a sore nuisance it is, too, although it makes but one in the cabin."

"Who is she?"

"I know not."

He turned to me.

"And now, young sir, what do you say? Will it be the second mate or a passenger for companion?"

"The second mate," I said.

He nodded his head, called a seaman to carry my luggage below and point the way, and walked off.

Master Juggins drew me back to the rail.

"'Tis best I should not wait," he said. "Stay below till you be safe out of Thames mouth, Master Harry. You should be safe enough now, but care is a sure precaution."

"I will not forget," I promised.

"And one thing more, lad. Do not stint your wants for money. Governor Burnet will aid you to draw whatever you may desire through the bankers in New York. Remember, you spend on my behalf. I would willingly use all I have to thwart Murray. You will require trade-goods for the savages, and perhaps equipment for yourself. Purchase the best. Spend—and spare not."

"You are too kind," I mumbled.

"Say rather your father was too kind. 'Tis little enough I have been able to do for you—sending you away, an exile, on a mission of danger. Yet I would have you look upon it as a privilege, if you will, Master Harry. When all is said and done, we are at war with France. 'Tis no war of generals and armies and admirals and fleets, I grant you. But war it is.

"True, there is the Peace of Utrecht, with all its ponderous provisions sullying so many square inches of white parchment. It proclaims peace. And nevertheless I say to you that we are at war."

He smote the rail with his hand by way of emphasis.

"What kind of a war?" I asked.

"Why, a war for the right to grow and to flourish, a war for trade. At other times, mark you, nations clash over questions of honor or territory. So their statesmen say. Actually there is a question of trade or merchantry at the bottom of every war that has been fought since the world began.

"The Romans crushed the Carthaginians—because they wanted another corner of Africa? Never! Because only by so doing could they make the Mediterranean a Roman lake and insure its control by their shipping.

"And so today we are fighting with France for control

of the trade of the Atlantic—and control of the Atlantic trade means control of the Western Plantations, America. We are fighting, Master Harry, with laws and tariffs and manufacturing skill and shipping instead of with men and deadly weapons."

"What is the immediate stake for which we fight?" I questioned, interested as always when this extraordinary man unloosed himself in conversation.

"The fur-trade. The country which wins the fur-trade will win control over the greatest number of savages. And the country which is so placed, especially if it be England, will win the military struggle which some day will have to be fought for dominion in America. So I would have you feel yourself a soldier, a general of trade, sent out upon a venture of great danger and importance. It may be, Master Harry, that you carry on your shoulders the future of England and of nations yet unborn."

He fired me so that I forgot my clumsy garments and outward character. I felt, I think, as any young knight who rides forth upon a deed of errantry and adventure.

"All that I can, I will do!" I exclaimed.

"Good. I can not ask more."

He clasped my hand in a wringing grip.

"I see a wherry approaching from up-river. I had best be gone. Good luck to you, lad, and write as occasion serves."

He went over the side with his lips pursed as if to whistle and a look of doleful pleasure on his face. Him, too, as it happened, I was never to see again. In fact, I wonder whether I should not have leaped over the vessel's side at that moment had I realized how complete was to be the severance of my life from all that I had known before.

But I did not know. I walked away from the rail with a light heart, inspired by Master Juggins' parting words and the vision he had called up before my eyes. I cast only a casual glance at the approaching wherry, which was still too far for me to observe whom she contained.

By the cabin entrance under the poop I found the seaman who had collected my scanty baggage, and he escorted me down the shallow stairs into a dark passage, which led to the main cabin, a room at the stern which ran the width of the ship and was lighted by three windows. It was mainly occupied by a table and four benches clamped to the deck. Off the passage itself, opened four doors, two on either side.

"Where do you berth?" the seaman asked me, pausing at the foot of the ladder-stairs.

"With the second mate."

He opened the first door on the right-hand, or starboard, side, revealing a space so tiny that I marveled how two men could force themselves into it at once. It was so low that I could not stand upright, so cramped that there was room only for one person outside the two short, shallow bunks which occupied two-thirds of its area.

"Do all the passengers lodge aft here?" I asked him carelessly as he disposed of my trappings.

"All save the negro; he is to sleep in the galley behind the companionway."

When he had gone I curled up in the lower bunk, which the second mate obviously had surrendered to me, and spent the remainder of the day in dozing and finishing off the shore-food Granny Juggins had prepared for my hours of seclusion. I listened long for the other passengers, but they kept the deck, probably watching the work of getting under way and taking a last look at the shores of England—as I should have liked to do myself.

I had not known my country much in recent years, and truth to tell, she did not seem to care for me. None the less I loved the emerald-green countryside, the soft sunshine through low-hanging clouds, even the turgid reek of smoky, crowded old London.

At last I must have dozed, for I was awakened suddenly by the strangest of sounds—a woman's voice singing. Clear and true, the soprano notes came through the bulk-

head at the foot of my bunk. It was a song I had never heard before, with a Scots accent to the words and a wonderful lilting melody that was somehow very sad all the while it was pretending to merriment. I had never been in Scotland—except for the sad venture of the '19; and that had left no pleasant memories, God knows—but the song set me to mourning for the heather-clad moors and the gray bens and the black lochs which its words lamented.

I rose from my bunk, and, stealing to the door, set it open, so that I might hear the better. The passage outside was empty, and the salt sea-air blew down the open companionway an occasional gust of talk. But I paid no attention to that.

I was so interested in the song and the singer's voice that I forgot even to watch the door of the cabin next to mine where she was singing. And judge to my surprize, as I leaned with my head bowed by the low lintel and my eyes fixed on the gently heaving deck, when the singer's door swung open and she stepped into the passage, almost at my side.

Her surprize, as was but natural, was greater than mine. So we stood there a moment within a long yard of each other, gazing mutely into each other's eyes. She was a slim, willowy lass, in a sea-green cloak that clung to her figure in the slight draft that eddied through the passage.

Her face, flower-white in the dim light that came down the companionway, had a sweetness of expression that belied the proud carriage of her head and an air of *hauteur* such as I had seen about the great ladies of King Louis' Court. Her hair was black and all blown in little wisps that curled at her forehead and neck. Her eyes were dark, too. Afterward I learned that they were of a dark brown that became black in moments of anger or excitement.

"I heard you singing," I said.

She turned and made to reënter her cabin. But I raised my hand involuntarily in a gesture of appeal.

"I am sorry," I went on quickly. "I did not mean to be rude. I—I could not help it."

She regarded me gravely, evidently puzzled by the incongruousness of my voice and my plowboy garments.

"You are never Scots, sir?" she answered finally.

"No, but I know Scotland."

A light dawned in her eyes with the words.

"Ah, then you will be knowing the song that I sang! 'Lochaber No More' 'tis called, and a bitter lament of exiles out of their own homeland."

"No, I never heard it before—but I have a brother buried on a hillside far north of Lochaber, in the Clan Donald country."

The sorrow that came into her face was beautiful to see. None but a person who had Gaelic blood could have sympathized so instantly and so generously with a stranger's grief.

"That will have been the great sadness upon you," she cried in the odd way that the Highland Scots have of using English. "Oh, sir, your woe will have been deep! So far from his own home!"

"Yes," I assented; "and he an exile, too.

In that moment I felt for the last time all the old raging hatred of the Hanoverian usurper, the hatred that springs from blood spilled and unavenged; and even though the reason within me stilled the tempest that memory had stirred, I knew, or something within me knew, that I never could be happy under the immediate rule of King George.

"An exile!"

She leaned toward me, her eyes like stars.

"You will be one of the Good People!"

I did not answer her, too confused in my wits to know what to say; and suddenly my confusion spread to her.

"It is wild I am talking, sir!" she exclaimed. "Never heed my words. Sure, who would be trusting his heart's blood to the stranger that stepped in his path?"

"I think I would trust mine to you," I answered boldly.

She smiled faintly

"From your manner you would be no Englishman, sir, saying such pretty things without consideration."

"I have been long out of England."

"Then your sorrow will not be so great for parting with all you have held dear. Lucky is your lot."

"You have never been to America?" I asked.

"I had never been out of Scotland until I came south to take ship today. Ah, sir, there is a great sorrow at my heart for the country I love."

We said nothing while you might have counted ten, and in the silence she looked away from me.

"I hope you will sing often," I said fatuously.

"I sing as the feeling comes to me," she retorted.

She gathered her cloak around her, and shut her cabin door.

"And you go with us to New York?" I asked—no less fatuously.

Her eyes danced with a glint of humor.

"Pray, sir, will there be any other stopping-place in the ocean?"

I laughed.

"My name," I began—and then I stopped abruptly.

My name at present was William Juggins, and I had a feeling of reluctance at practising deceit upon this girl at our first meeting. But she saved me from my quandary.

"You will not be what you might seem, sir," she said gravely. "That I can see, and perhaps you will not think me indiscreet if I say so much."

" 'Tis true," I assented eagerly. "Indeed——"

"But you will be meeting my—" she hesitated ever so little—"my father presently, no doubt, and he will make us known to one another. Now I must go on deck."

And she walked by me with a faint swish of skirts that sounded like an echo of far-off fairy music.

Her father! Who could he be? And then realization smote me.

Plainly, she could not be de Veulle's daughter—nor Captain Abbot's. She was Murray's.

I went back into my cabin and shut the door, feeling not altogether satisfied, despite the fragrance of her person which still lingered in my nostrils, the recollection of her dainty charm, the indefinable tone of high breeding which had emanated from her.

Murray's daughter! I rebelled against the idea. It could not be. It ought not to be. What right had he to a daughter—and such a maid as this? 'Twas absurd! Manifestly absurd!

Why, I must hate the man. I had no other recourse. And he had a daughter! And above all this daughter!

VI

THE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES

WHEN I came on deck the next morning we were driving down-channel before a smart northwest wind. The sky was blue overhead; the low rollers were just capped with foam; the air was clean and tangy; the brownish, salt-stained canvas shone in the sunlight; the cordage hummed and droned.

Murray stood by the weather rail with the negro, Tom, at his elbow. As I emerged from the companionway Tom leaned forward and whispered something to his master. Murray walked straight across the deck to my side, his eyes fastened upon my face.

"How now, Master Juggins," he said heartily, his hand outstretched, "and did you leave your good uncle—or is it cousin?—well?"

I perceived that he took me for the lout I was dressed to represent, and strove to play up to the disguise.

"Well enough, sir," I answered sullenly, shifting clownishly from foot to foot.

" 'Tis good!" he exclaimed. "Faith I am vastly relieved. I have a warm regard for honest Robert Juggins. He has spoken of me, perhaps?"

The question, designed to catch my simple mentality unawares, gave me considerable amusement.

"Oh, aye," I muttered.

"We have been rivals in our ventures, as you doubtless know," continued Murray, taking a pinch of snuff in a manner which the Duc d'Orléans might have envied.

"But he doesn't take it seriously, sir," I assured him gravely.

"Eh? What's that?"

"He laughs about it, sir."

And I goggled at him stupidly. After a moment's inspection of my countenance he seemed constrained to accept the remark as witless innocence, for a grim light of humor appeared in his eyes.

"Laughs, does he? Zooks, I might have known it. He is a merry soul, Robert Juggins, and I should like to see him footing a morris to a right merry tune. Mayhap we shall see it some day. Who knows?"

"Who knows, sir?" I repeated vacantly.

"And you are to cast your fortunes in America, lad?" he resumed.

"Oh, aye, sir."

"What I might have expected from a fine, upstanding young fellow," he applauded me. "We need many of your like. You may count upon my good offices in New York. Faith, I shall be glad to do a favor if I can, for Robert Juggins' nephew—or did you say cousin?"

"I am——"

But he saved me from the lie.

"Ah, here is come one of our fellow passengers," he interrupted.

I turned to see de Veulle approaching us.

" 'Tis a French gentleman," pursued Murray, bent upon winning my confidence with his easy manners and glib tongue, "on his way to Canada. He can tell you rare tales of the wilderness and the savages. Ha, *chevalier,* meet a young countryman of mine. Such is the timber we use to exploit the new plantations. Master Juggins—the Chevalier de Veulle."

All unsuspecting, de Veulle made me a slight bow, a look of indifferent disdain in his face at sight of my plebeian figure. The disguise was good, and I hoped I might cozen him for a time at least. But no man forgets another who

has toyed with his life, and his indifference was dissipated the instant his eye met mine.

"Juggins?" he exclaimed in bewilderment. "You said Juggins, Monsieur Murray?"

"Sure, 'tis so," returned Murray urbanely. "Not our friend, the doughty trader, you understand, but——"

"Parbleu!" swore de Veulle. "This man is no more named Juggins than I am!"

In his excitement his English, which was broken enough at best, became almost incoherent. Murray favored me with a brief glance of suspicion.

"Who then?" he demanded.

"Ormerod! 'Tis Harry Ormerod, the Jacobite refugee!"

Murray snapped his fingers to Tom, the negro, who had been a silent witness to our conversation. In an instant he stood beside us, his baleful yellow eyes glaring at me.

"Is this the man who came with Master Juggins to the hearing before the Lords of Trade?" snapped Murray.

"He de man, massa," Tom answered in a husky voice that had a snarl in it.

"You are sure?"

"Yes, massa."

"Tom doesn't make mistakes," remarked Murray with a gesture of dismissal to the negro. "May I ask who you are, sir?" he addressed me.

"I suppose you may," I replied coolly; and with a sense of relief I ripped the bobbed scratch-wig off my head and tossed it into the sea. "Does that help you at all?" I inquired of de Veulle.

He stared back at me, his face all drawn with hatred.

"I knew you with it on," he said savagely. "It became you. Why should a deserter wear the clothes of a gentleman?"

I laughed at him, but Murray intervened quickly.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

De Veulle made a gesture of disgust in my direction.

"This person, who was in the immediate entourage of

the Pretender, abandoned his leader not long ago and fled to England to seek a pardon, repudiated and detested by all honorable men in Paris. But in England his protestations of loyalty were refused, for they naturally doubted the sincerity of one who wearied so soon of an unfortunate cause."

"Is this true?" Murray asked me.

"Within reason," I said.

Murray stared from one to the other of us. Plainly he was whimsically amused by our altercation.

"Stap me, but I rejoice to see that we may look forward to an entertaining voyage!" he exclaimed. "I had feared 'twould be most tedious. Are you seeking satisfaction from the gentleman, *chevalier?*"

"I shall fight him when I choose, on ground of my own choosing," replied de Veulle curtly.

"And by no means with small-swords," I jeered.

He gave me a black look.

"You will pray me to kill you if you ever fall into my power, Ormerod. I can wait until then."

"As you please."

He turned and left us. Murray took snuff very deliberately, first offering the box to me—which he had not done before—and scrutinized me politely from head to foot.

"I fear I have been patronizing in my conduct, sir," he observed. "Pray accept my apologies."

"You are most kind," I said ironically.

" 'Twas a perfect disguise," he went on. "And your manner, if I may say so, was well conceived."

"I thank you."

"In short, I find you an opponent of totally different importance. You are an opponent?" he shot at me.

"Sure, sir, that is for you to say," I made answer. "So far as I know at this time we merely happen to be passengers together on this craft."

He laughed.

"I might have known it!" he exclaimed. " 'Twas not

like Juggins to send a bumpkin to Burnet. He hath been an enemy I might not scorn at any moment. And for a mere merchant he hath extraordinary spirit."

This was said with an air of condescension which irked me.

"You, sir," I remarked, "are no less a merchant. Why pretend to gentrice?"

A remarkable change came over the man. He ceased from tapping on his snuff-box. A wave of color suffused his face and neck; his eyes flashed. He straightened his back and shoulders and frowned upon me.

"Pretend—gentrice!" he rasped. "Sir, you are insulting. I have the blood of kings in my veins. I am of the Murrays of Cobbielaw. I quarter my arms with the Keiths, the Humes, the Morays—with every great family of Scotland. My grandfather four times removed was James V.

"I pretend to gentrice! I tell you there are few families in Europe can boast my lineage."

"It hath a Jacobite color to it," I could not resist observing.

He cooled rapidly at this, and the broad Scots accent which had crept into his speech soon disappeared.

"That is easily said—and easier disproved," he returned. "For myself, there is no more loyal adherent of King George, as you are likely to learn, sir, if you plan to backslide in the Pretender's interest when you reach New York. We provincials may be distant many thousands of miles from Court, but we are none the less careful in our devotion to the sovereign."

"So I have been told," I said dryly. "As for Master Juggins, his grandfather was steward to my father, and still I think him as much entitled to respect as any man, noble or common, who can prattle of sixteen quarterings. Family, sir, is not the more creditable for being talked about."

Murray laughed harshly.

"You have a sour tongue, young sir. I say to you plainly that if 'twere in my interest I might make things

uncomfortable for you here. We may yet sight a King's ship."

It was my turn to laugh.

"When that time comes, we will attend to it. I thank you for warning me in advance."

He pocketed his snuff-box, swung around on his heel and strode off across the deck; but he had not reached the mainmast when he seemed to change his intent and returned to my side.

"Master Ormerod," he said, "I was in error to speak as I did of your friend. I crave your pardon."

He spoke so simply and unaffectedly as to take my breath away. There was naught for me to do but accept the apology in the spirit apparently intended.

"Sure, sir," I replied, "let us forget what hath passed."

"Willingly," he agreed. "There is enough contention, without belittling the most sacred thing in the world by needless bickering."

"And what is the most sacred thing in the world?" I asked.

"Good blood," he said quite straightforwardly. "But I must go below now. I have some papers to attend to. And I shall also attempt to induce the Chevalier de Veulle to preserve the amenities of life whilst we are restricted to such confined quarters."

"He shall not have to labor against my hostility," I promised as he departed.

Despite myself, I was taken with the man. His queer vanity, his unmistakable breeding, his ready wit, the assurance of power and self-sufficiency which radiated from him and explained, as I thought, his readiness to admit himself in the wrong, all these joined to inspire respect for his parts, if not admiration for his character.

During the rest of that day I made myself at home about the ship, talking with the seamen and their officers and watching vainly for the lady of the green cloak who had awakened me with her song. But she kept her cabin until

the second afternoon, when we were sailing easily with a fair wind abeam. I found her then as I returned from a walk forward, standing with her hand on the poop-railing to steady her.

"I fear you are a poor sailor," I called to her.

She inclined her head for answer.

"Well, I have met your father," I said, coming to her side, "and I make no doubt he would present me were he here, so——"

"Sir," she said stiffly, "I have no desire for your company."

I stared at her, mouth agape.

"If I have offended——" I began.

"I may as well tell you," she interrupted me again, "that I have no personal liking or disliking for anything you have said or done in my presence. But I have heard that about you which will make me have no inclination for your company."

"And I shall ask you to tell me what that is," I retorted with mounting indignation. "It is not fair that you should accept the slurs of an enemy behind my back."

She hesitated.

"That may be so," she admitted, "but you will be willing to answer me two questions?"

"Surely."

"You are Captain Ormerod, formerly chamberlain to King James III?"

"Yes."

"And you not long ago abandoned the King's service and fruitlessly sought a pardon in London?"

"Yes."

I can not very well describe the scorn of voice and manner with which she addressed me.

"That is enough for me," she said. "You are a traitor, a deserter, proven out of your own mouth."

"But——"

"No, sir; there is naught you can say would interest me.

I should despise you none the less had you deserted in the same circumstances to my own side. It makes it no less culpable that you deserted from my side because our fortunes were at low ebb. And indeed I think it will be a sure sign there is a God in heaven that such a black traitor as you will be, should be scorned even by the wicked men of the usurper in London."

"But you shall hear me," I protested. "This is absurd, what you say. You have taken two bare statements of fact and twisted into them the implications skilfully made by a personal enemy. You——"

"Last night, sir," she said cuttingly, withdrawing the folds of her cloak so that they might not touch me, "you played upon my sympathies with your tale of exile and a brother buried in the Clan Donald country, and I was all for sympathy with you and sorrow for your sorrow. You as much as told me you were one of the Good People. You let me deceive myself, after you had deceived me first. Oh, you will have acted unspeakably!"

"What I told you was true!"

"It could never have been."

"I swear it was. I was out in the '19; I fled to Scotland with my brother; he died and was buried there; I escaped with the remnants of the expedition; I am an exile at this moment."

"An exile! Phaugh! Think on the honest men can truly say that in their misfortune this day! And you—I could weep for the shame that your dead brother and the mother that bore you will be feeling as they look down upon you!"

With that she was gone, and I was left cursing—cursing de Veulle, whose treacherous tongue had planted the distorted shreds of truth in her mind; cursing Murray, who must have stood by and listened to it all, smugly amused; cursing my cousin who had put me in such a plight, after winning my inheritance; cursing the men and women at St. Germain who repaid years of sacrifice and ungrudging

loyalty with such canards; cursing Juggins for having embarked me upon this ship with the girl; cursing myself for getting into such a false position; cursing the girl——

But no. Common sense came to my rescue then. There was something unaccountably fine about her attitude, something I should never have thought to uncover in Murray's daughter, however beautiful and attractive she might be. There was devotion for you, faithfulness to a lost cause, the single-minded truthfulness which only a good woman can possess.

Her indignation was the index to her personality. By it I might know that she was really worth while, that to win her respect must be an achievement for any man.

And that brought a new thought into my mind. Could the two men she was with have her respect? Could she respect her father, Murray? Aye, perhaps; for if he labored secretly in the Jacobite interest she, with her flaming, misdirected loyalty to the Stuarts, would excuse his deceptions and crimes, if only they brought back her King to the throne.

I was familiar with the way men and women of her persuasion ignored the well-being of their country, apart from their King. They could see no difference between the two. What did it matter if France profited by the issue, so long as James replaced George?

This brought me to de Veulle. Surely she could not respect him! If she knew what I knew— But manifestly she, who had never been out of Scotland before, could know nothing of his career in Paris.

And he had a way with him, there could be no denial of that. He was a handsome devil, with the *flair* which appeals to all women, good and bad. Aye, he might win her regard for a time; but I was prepared to stake all that she would unmask him in the end.

The twilight faded rapidly, and I found myself with no appetite for the crowded main cabin, where de Veulle and Murray played piquet, or my stuffy berth. I strolled the

deck, immersed in thought. There was so much to think about. The episode with this girl, whose name even I did not know, had brought into vivid opposition the events of the past and the uncertain future which lay before me.

I conned over what Juggins had told me, memorized anew many of the messages he had entrusted to me, speculated upon the possible turn of affairs. I planned in some vague way to win a fortune in that unknown New World ahead of me, and with the proceeds in one hand and a pardon in the other, return and reclaim Foxcroft from those abominable Hampshire cousins.

With chin cupped in hand I leaned upon the starboard rail in the black well of shadow which was formed by the overhang of the forecastle, and the towering piles of canvas that clothed the foremast. Somewhere beyond the wastes of watery darkness that veiled my eyes lay England, the home which had disowned me. I——

Without any warning a huge arm was twisted around my shoulders and a hand so huge that my teeth could make no impression in it was clamped down over my mouth. Another arm encircled my waist. My arms were pinned to my sides. My legs kicked feebly at a muscular body which pressed me against the bulwark. Fighting back with all my strength, I was nevertheless lifted gradually from the deck and shoved slowly across the flat level of the fife-rail.

Do what I might, I could not resist the pressure of those tremendous arms which seemed to have a reach and a power twice those of my own. I gasped for breath as they squeezed my lungs—and in gasping I sensed a queer taint in the air, a musky odor which I did not at once associate with the seamen or any one else on board the ship.

It was no use. I could not resist. The snakelike arms mastered me. One shifted swiftly to a grip on my legs. I was whirled into the air and dropped clear of the railing—falling, falling, until the cold waters engulfed me.

VII

A TRUCE

I CAME to the surface, fighting for breath, my hands battling fruitlessly at the slimy side of the ship, which slid past as relentlessly as the passage of time. I tried to cry out, but the salt water choked me. Not a sound came from the decks above. The blackness was absolute, except for the mild gleam of a watch-lanthorn on the poop.

Danger and the peril of death often have been my lot, but never in all my life—no, not even when the Keepers of the Trail had bound me to the torture-stake—have I experienced the abysmal fear which clutched my heart as I struggled to save myself from the chilling waters whose numbing embrace was throttling my vitality no less surely than the long arms which had cast me overboard.

Death was only a brace of minutes away—not death from drowning, but death from the bitter cold that paralyzed my limbs and smote my heart. In the mad desperation of my fear I heaved myself waist-high out of the water, hands clutching and clawing for the support which reason must have denied me to expect.

I was sinking beneath a smooth-running wave along the counter when my fingers came in contact with a dripping rope, which slipped through their grip and lashed me in the face. This time I did contrive to cry out, a brief, choked yell of exultation. My hands possessed themselves of it again, and I rove a loose knot in the end.

Had I dared, I would have rested myself in this loop before beginning to attempt the climbing of the mossy wall of the ship's side; but the coldness of the water forbade it.

Only by the utmost power of will could I force myself to the necessary effort. A few moments' delay, and I should be incapable of action.

With teeth clinched I drew myself upward along the rope, thrusting forward with my feet for purchase against the side. Sometimes I slipped on the wet planks, and then I was put to it to hold my position. But after I withdrew my body from the water, what with the urgency of my effort and the stimulation of the exercise, some degree of my strength returned; and presently I was able to pull myself up the rope, hand over hand, until I reached a small projecting structure at the level of the deck to which was fastened the starboard rigging of the mainmast. How I blessed the untidy seamanship of Captain Abbot, which would have aroused the wrath of any true sailor, no doubt.

On this bit of a platform I rested myself, below the level of the bulwarks, one arm thrust round a tautened stay. And now for the first time I gave thought to my experience. I suppose that at the most not more than five minutes had elapsed since I had been heaved overboard, and obviously no one had witnessed the incident, for the deck was as quiet and deserted as it had been when I was attacked.

Who had done it? I accepted as a primary fact the impossibility that it could have been one of the crew. I had speaking acquaintance with only two of them, Captain Abbot, himself, and Master Ringham, the second mate, a taciturn Devon man, whose conversation consisted of curses, grunts and monosyllables. Neither could have any grudge against me.

No, I must seek the assailant in the camp of my known enemies, and those immense, twining arms could belong only to the ape-like negro. With the realization, hot blood drummed in my ears. I scrambled over the bulwark in a flash, and crouched down upon the deck to survey the situation. It was one against three—no, four, I reflected bitterly; for I made no doubt the girl would array herself against me. I must have some weapon.

I looked around me, noting that the watch were all esconced upon the forecastle or the poop. Then I remembered that ranged around the bottoms of the masts were long handbars of wood, iron-tipped, which were used in making fast the sail-ropes. I ran across to the mainmast and tore one from its slot.

Nobody had yet seen me in the pitch darkness, and I stole across the deck to the door which gave entrance to the poop, my water-soaked shoes quite soundless. The door was ajar, and I opened it very carefully, listening to the murmur of voices in the main cabin. There was no light in the passage which led to the main cabin from the foot of the shallow stairs that descended from the deck level; but the main cabin itself was brilliantly lighted by several lanthorns.

Murray and de Veulle were sitting on the bench which ran across the stern, the table in front of them littered with cards. Murray, a look of placid satisfaction on his face, was pouring rum into two glasses. De Veulle was laughing as if he had listened to the merriest tale in the world. So much I saw when the entrance into the main cabin was darkened by the body of the negro, Tom.

He saw me descending the stairs, and apparently took me to be one of the officers coming off watch. At any rate, he stepped back into the main cabin and stood there, waiting to give me room. The passage was not more than fifteen or sixteen feet long, and as I approached him I smelled again that rancid, musky odor—the body smell, as I afterward discovered, of the savage, black or red—which had overwhelmed my nostrils just before I was pitched over the side.

'Twas that decided me. I took a firm grip on my improvised club, and, stepping into the pool of light in the main cabin, swung square around, face to face with Tom. He threw up both hands and staggered back with a wild scream of terror, eyes popping from his ashen-gray face.

I gave him no time for recovery, but brought down the

iron-tipped end of the handbar with all my force across his skull. The blow would have killed any save a black man. I meant it to kill him. As it was, he dropped like a slaughtered ox, and lay in a crumpled heap of tawdry finery on the floor.

Doors banged in the passage, and I stepped to one side, setting my back to the bulkhead, the while I fastened my eyes upon the startled amazement with which Murray and de Veulle regarded me. 'Twas Murray recovered first.

"Zooks," he remarked, taking snuff with his usual precision. "It seems that Tom is growing in the way of making mistakes."

"Aye, and such mistakes are like to react upon others," I replied fiercely.

"If I were a refugee from justice, I should be careful how I threatened law-abiding subjects," he answered calmly. "Well, well, it seems we have more company."

I followed his glance to the passage, where stood the girl of the green cloak, whilst over her shoulder peered the square, puzzled features of my silent cabinmate, Master Ringham.

The girl said nothing, her eyes shifting gravely from one to the other of us. But Master Ringham's official status got the better of his distaste for words.

"What hath happened?" he asked. "Is the negro dead?"

"I think so," I said. "He——"

"Not he," corrected Murray cheerfully. "You know not Tom, good Master Ormerod. He hath a skull on him can only be opened with blasting-powder."

"It matters little," I returned. "The rascal attacked me above, Master Ringham. I pursued him down here. There is naught more to be said. I will settle with his master."

The second mate looked questioningly toward Murray. I hated to compromise so, but I had not missed the veiled threat he had addressed to me nor his use of the name

Ormerod. Remember, I was still known to the crew as Juggins.

I was uncertain what attitude the captain might take if he was told that I was a political refugee. There might be a reward at stake—and sailors were human like other men. What was one man's life to them—and he a stranger—if so many hundred pounds would purchase it?

"Why, that is fairly spoken," rejoined Murray, somewhat to my surprize. "I know naught of the circumstances, Master Ringham, but perhaps I may settle with our friend here. As for the negro, I will attend to him."

"And the captain?" questioned the second mate uncertainly.

"Oh, I see no reason why we should bother Master Abbot at this juncture. There will be time enough if we fail to agree upon the issue."

"There must be no more violence," warned Ringham, his eyes on me, his words addressed to all of us.

"Violence!" rejoined Murray jovially. "Let us reject the idea altogether. Why should we disdain sweet reason's rule? Eh? Master Orm—er—Juggins?"

I bowed ironically.

"If there is any further disagreement Captain Abbot shall be called," I said to Ringham. "That I promise you."

Ringham nodded and clumped back to his bunk, doubtless relieved at not being required to surrender more of his time off-watch. But the girl stood her ground, her eyes accusing all of us.

"Well, Marjory," said Murray pleasantly, "and do you plan to join in our debate?"

That was the first time I heard her name, and—why, I can not say—I heard it without surprise, as if I had always known it to be hers. It suited her, as names sometimes express the character and appearance of their possessors.

"What hath happened?" she asked in the same words the second mate had used.

"You have heard," said Murray.

She shook her head.

"That is not all. This—" she hesitated—"gentleman's clothes are wet. Tom does not attack people without orders."

Murray shrugged his shoulders. De Veulle answered her, leaning across the table, his eyes burning with hatred for me.

"You know what this man hath done, *mademoiselle,*" he cried. "You know his record in the past. You know that he comes with us to spy out our plans, to thwart, if may be, what we undertake to do. Is any fate too hard for him? Why should you concern yourself?"

His voice grew coaxing.

" 'Tis no matter for ladies' soft hands to dabble in."

"Then there has been fighting?" she asked.

I could stand it no longer.

"Fighting?" I snapped. "Aye, if you call assassination fighting. An attack in the dark upon an unarmed man, throwing him overboard to drown as you might a blind puppy, never a chance for his life!"

"Yet you are here, sir?" she said quietly.

" 'Tis only by the intervention of Providence that I was saved—or the untidiness of our captain, who left a rope trailing over the side."

I grew sarcastic.

"You were pleased to say today that it was proof of a God in heaven that I had suffered misfortune. Sure, will you deny that the same God hath protected me against your father's——"

"My father?" she repeated questioningly.

"Well, what is he?" I returned cuttingly. "Mayhap you have some pet name for a parent who practises assassination."

"You have no right to say that, sir," she said with spirit.

"No right? Did not you yourself say Tom never acted without orders?"

"But——"

"And furthermore, if this case is not enough, let me tell you that this man here"—I pointed to Murray; for some reason I disliked to call him her father, even in wrath—"set a gang of ruffians to murder a friend of mine in London."

"Do you know that for a fact, sir?" she demanded with her unflinching gravity.

"I do."

Murray rose from his seat behind the table.

"Your proof, sir?" he asked coldly.

"Proof?" I answered weakly. "Why, I was there!"

"Aye, sir," he rejoined with dignity. "But your proof that I hired assassins?"

I was silent.

"As for Tom," he continued, "if he had drowned you I do not believe that I should have wept many tears. You are in my way, sir. But you have no reason to assume from my daughter's casual words that I was accomplice to his acts. Could you prove it before the captain or any court of law?"

I saw the twinkle in his eyes and knew that he was playing with me.

"No," said I shortly; "I could not prove it, even against him. I have no witnesses."

"And you could not even go into a court of law," he pursued, "for you are an outlaw, denied benefit of law or clergy."

"Yes," I flared in answer; "and you, sir, what think you might be your fate in New York if I denounced you to Governor Burnet for attempted murder? Would he make use of the opportunity—or no?"

The realization of this trump card I held had come to me in a flash of inspiration. Now it lay face up for all to see, and there could be no doubt it gave my enemies cause for uneasiness. Murray regarded me thoughtfully; a worried look replaced the cynical satisfaction with which de Veulle

had watched my badgering; the bewilderment upon Marjory's face was deepened.

"I do not think I am so weakly situated as you had supposed," I mocked them. "Aye, you may denounce me to the captain for a Jacobite conspirator, and it may be he will see fit to believe you. You are three to my one. But when we reach New York, and I am brought before the officers of the Crown, I may have a different story to tell. Think you the governor would be loath to implicate a French officer and the man who is leading the fight against his struggle to control the fur-trade?"

Murray nodded his head slowly, and sank back in his seat.

"Sure, you are a lad after my own heart," he said. "That was well thought of. 'Tis checkmate—for this present."

"Nonsense," stormed de Veulle. "Why should we fear his trumpery tales? Who are we to be denounced by him?"

"Because I know somewhat of Governor Burnet," replied Murray good-humoredly. "Nay, *chevalier,* I dislike to yield my point as much as any man; but Master Ormerod hath stopped us. We must have a truce."

But he reckoned without Marjory. The lady of the green cloak stood forward in the center of the cabin, passionate indignation shaking her whole figure.

"Oh, why do you talk like this?" she exclaimed. "Are we criminals that we must bargain with a criminal? It is as if we were embarked upon an enterprise as vile as his life of spying and intrigue!"

I had not made any headway in regaining her good opinion, 'twas evident, and that must be the excuse for my barbed retort.

"You show unwonted sensibility, my lady," I said. "Sure, no men with good consciences would stoop to bargain with such as I."

"I fear me, Marjory," said Murray gently, "that you have no appreciation of the tangled path which must be

trod by those who concern themselves with affairs of state. The good and the bad are strangely intermingled. Sometimes we must consort with those we despise in order to gain a good cause. Sometimes we must use tools which irk us to fashion a policy to a righteous end. Sometimes we must stoop to tricks and plays which soil and shame.

"It can not be otherwise. And after all, what does it matter that you and I have cause to regret, if we may see the attainment of our goal? Shall we regret the payment of a bitter price? 'Twould be parsimonious, I say. 'Tis not we who count, who are but pawns; but the cause we serve."

"I like it not," she flamed.

"Like it or not, 'tis inevitable."

He turned to me.

"It seems then, Master Ormerod, that we must proclaim a truce for the time being."

"It is your necessity," I told him flatly.

"And yours," he returned urbanely. "What guarantees shall we exchange?"

I thought.

"Why, we can neither afford to risk the denunciation of the other," I said at last. "You, because you know that the Provincial Government would seize any excuse to incommode you. I, because I know that the Provincial Government would find it difficult to protect me against your charge, even though it exploited mine."

"The advantage would seem to be on my side," he remarked tentatively.

I leaned across the table so that his eyes met mine fully.

"Not so much as you might think," I asserted. "Have I the look of one who would fail in a desparate venture?"

"No, no," he answered smilingly. "So be it, then. But the truce holds good only for the period of our voyage together?"

"That is understood," I agreed.

His eyes hardened.

"Did you ever hear of the Red Death and the Black Death, Master Ormerod?"

I shook my head, puzzled.

"You have met the Black Death. You have yet to meet the Red Death. And you may meet the Black Death again," he added as Tom groaned where he lay on the floor.

Marjory shuddered.

"Enough of this!" she exclaimed. "Is it understood there is to be no killing on this ship?"

"It is, my dear," Murray responded. "And now I think you had best withdraw. This has been a trying interview for you, I fear."

She looked from one to the other of us, as if half in doubt; and then gathered her cloak around her. We all three, as with one accord, bowed low as she stepped into the passage.

Murray opened a lanthorn and snuffed the candle within.

"You must be weary, Master Ormerod," he said solicitously. "It hath been a trying evening for you too, I fear."

"Ah, the devil played a strong hand, Master Juggins," de Veulle chimed in, with a yawn. "You do not object to your old name, I hope? It fits you like a snug shirt."

"Not in the least," I retorted. " 'Tis an honest name. You will note, I hope, that the devil, as always, was checkmated, even though he had two of the minor fiends of darkness at his elbow."

Murray laughed, the fine, resonant laugh of a well-bred, honorable gentleman.

"Zooks, *chevalier,* have done. The man hath a rare metal."

"If wit fails, try small-swords," I suggested as I left the cabin.

VIII

I HEAR FIRST OF THE DOOM TRAIL

ONE day followed another and one week ran into the next as the *New Venture* made her southing and bore west toward the New World. The weather was blustery and raw. Gales stormed down out of the polar regions and drenched us with snow. Head winds baffled us. Once a tall-masted stranger chased us for two days and a night before we lost her and might continue our course.

But we who shared the tiny quarters under the poop contrived to live together without further quarrels. It seemed almost as if the opposition of the elements had overwhelmed the bitterness of conflicting human interests.

The girl with the green cloak—I called her Marjory in my thoughts—ignored my existence. She spent much of her time with de Veulle, walking the deck with him, reading or playing at cards. I liked to think she did it to provoke me. Sometimes, too, she chatted with the seamen, and they taught her the trick of handling the wheel. But I did not speak to her after the night she came into the main cabin and found the negro, Tom, lying on the floor at my feet.

De Veulle gave me a wide berth. He did not like to be reminded before others of that duel in the Toison d'Or. Tom's eyes never left me if I was within the range of their vision; their blind, yellow glare haunted my dreams. He snarled sometimes like a caged wild beast when I walked near him. But he never lifted a finger against me.

With Murray my relations were outwardly friendly. He liked much to talk, and indeed he demonstrated a con-

siderable acquaintance with the great men of his period. But he never dropped a hint concerning the enterprise in which he was now engaged. Nor for that matter did he ever seek to draw me out on the mission I served.

He was a man of extraordinary perspicacity. Once he had determined accurately the measure of an opponent he never made the mistake of underrating his enemy.

"Most of the failures in life come from overconfidence, Master Omerod—" he called me by my real name with scrupulous courtesy when we were alone, and was equally scrupulous to dub me Juggins if Captain Abbot or one of the crew happened to be present—"as I dare swear you know. I have long made it a rule of my life never to believe that any other man could be less diligent about his affairs than I myself.

"If I find myself in opposition to a man—yourself, let us suppose—I do you the credit of granting you my own degree of intellect. So, I have learned, may one's interests be safeguarded."

For the rest, he exhibited much concern in the personalities at Versailles and St. Germain, and aired his views regarding the existing state of the English nobility and Court with a vanity which would have savored of the popinjay had it not been for his undoubted earnestness and the strange spell which the man's personality wove about him. Most of all, however, he delighted to discuss his own genealogy and the history of the famous Scots families with whom he was connected. He could descant on such topics for an entire afternoon—and with an uncommon candor and entertaining flow of intellect.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of our intercourse was that we talked together, more or less, every day for nearly two months; and at the end of that time I had the material for delineating the character of a man of gentility and fine feeling in matters of honor, who possessed the friendship or intimacy of many famous personages in Europe and America.

I knew that he claimed to be a younger son of a good Scots house, fallen into decay by reason of the Jacobite wars. I knew that he played a good hand at piquet, and was entirely honorable in gambling. I knew he had a dainty taste in snuff, cravats and linen.

And I knew absolutely nothing else, gained from his own admissions and observance of his habits. He was patronizingly cordial to Captain Abbot and the other officers of the ship; he controlled Tom as I should a dog; he treated Marjory with consideration, even affection, although not as I should have expected him to treat a daughter; he observed toward de Veulle exactly the right mixture of the older man of the world and the boon comrade.

He never referred to the enmity between us or the bargain we had made until the day we sailed through the Narrows, the entrance to New York's inner harbor, and saw far in the distance, behind tree-covered islands in a long perspective of forest shore-lines, the miniature provincial capital huddled on the point of the big island which the Dutch named Manhattan, an occasional steeple pointing skyward above the two and three story houses and the frowning ramparts of Fort George.

"We part for a time, Master Ormerod," he said, coming upon me where I leaned on the railing in the waist of the ship, viewing this unknown land where I must retrieve my fallen fortunes. "Our truce expires when we disembark."

"That is true," I assented.

"There is somewhat I would venture to observe upon, if you will permit me," he continued detachedly.

I inclined my head, thinking mainly of the exquisite beauty of this woodland setting, with the early Spring foliage already turning green, and the wide spaces of emptiness so close to a principal center of civilization.

"You are a youth of boldness and courage. I do not seek to flatter you by saying so. You possess intelligence. You may go far in the provinces, always supposing you do not succeed in winning a pardon. I opine that a pardon

might be won if you went about it in the right way. There are gentlemen at Whitehall, who——''

His hesitation was eloquent.

''And you would suggest?'' I asked him, faintly amused as I perceived the drift of his intention.

''Think well before you commit yourself to this venture. Mark me, sir, it means little to me. You know nothing of what you embark upon. You can not hope to overcome me. Why, the governor of this province, with all the semi-regal powers at his command, has failed to balk me in my plans. My influence is no less in London. If you continue as you have begun you will end, I fear, in an early grave. I say it not as a threat. 'Tis merely a prediction.''

''I fear me I should lose your good opinion did I take your advice,'' I replied.

He looked me straight in the eyes.

''You would,'' he said curtly, and he turned on his heel and left me.

Three hours later we lay at anchor in the East River under the lee of Nutten Island, which some called the Governor's because it was part of his official estate. The extent of the shipping was surprizing considering the size of the town, and we were fortunate to secure small boats to ferry us ashore. They landed us at a wharf on a canal which ran up into the town along the middle of Broad Street. From here I had my baggage carried by a waterman to the George Tavern in Queen Street which he recommended as being favored by the gentry.

Murray's party I overheard giving directions for the conduct of their effects to Cawston's Tavern in Hanover Square, a comfortable open place which we traversed on our way to the George. The streets were all shaded by a variety of trees—locusts, beeches, elms—and in some parts and along certain blocks they were paved.

The houses, many of them, were stanchly built of brick and tiles, often of more than one color. Their gable ends fronted upon the streets. The more pretentious ones had

gardens behind, and many had platforms on the roof whence the members of the family might secure a broad view of the town and bay.

Along the water-front there were frequent warehouses, and the chief impression that I gained was one of bustling wealth and prosperity. Indeed, although New York was then, and for many years afterwards, inferior in population to Boston and Philadelphia, it vied with them in the volume of its trade.

After a meal which was as good as any I had ever eaten in Paris or London I inquired of Master Kurt van Dam, the proprietor of the George, where I might find Governor Burnet. Van Dam was a broad-bodied, square-headed Dutchman. He sat in the ordinary, smoking a long clay pipe, and if the waiter had not pointed him out to me I should not have been able to distinguish him from a dozen other natives of the town, precisely similar in build and each sprawled back upon a bench or chair, puffing at a pipe which reached from his lips to his knees.

"You vant to sbpeak to der gofernor, eh?" he said slowly. "Hah! Myndert!"

He recalled the waiter who had piloted me to his side.

"Haf you seen der gofernor dis morning?"

Myndert had not.

"Vell, it maype he is at der Fort," reflected Master van Dam.

"He vouldt pe, if he vas," said a stout burgher on the next bench. "Put he is not."

"You are sure?"

"*Ja.*"

A third stout Dutchman removed his pipe from his mouth and blew a mouthful of smoke toward the ceiling.

"Der gofernor is still at Cabptain van Horne's," he said, and immediately replaced the pipe in his mouth.

"To be sure," assented van Dam. "Der gofernor is only a little time married to Captain van Horne's dotter.

He lifs with dem vile der house in der Fort is mate bpretty for her."

"And where is Captain van Horne's house?" I asked.

"In der Broad-Vay not far oop from der Fort. You valk across through Hanofer Square."

I thanked him and walked forth.

In Hanover Square, which was only a few steps distant, there was a crowd collected about the entrance to Cawston's Tavern. Murray was standing in the doorway, Tom on one side of him, and a huge, red-haired gaint in buckskin, with knife and tomahawk at his belt on the other. I stared at the red-haired man, for he was the first woodsman I had seen, observing with curiosity his shaggy locks and fur cap and the brutal ferocity of his face.

I stared so long that I attracted the attention of Murray, who broke off his conversation with the group surrounding him, and with a pale smile pointed me out to his buckskin retainer. The man scowled at me, and one hand went to his knife-hilt.

I spoke to the citizen nearest me.

"What is the occasion of the crowd?" I asked.

" 'Tis Master Murray, the fur-trader, hath returned from London after winning his case before the Lords of Trade," he answered.

"How is that?"

He regarded me suspiciously.

"Are you a stranger?"

"I am but just landed from the same ship as carried Master Murray," I assured him.

"Ah!"

His manner became impressive; plainly he considered himself one who imparts portentous news.

"Master Murray, as you will soon learn, sir, is our most enterprising merchant. He hath built up with much difficulty a valuable trade with the French, with the result that the business of the province hath doubled.

"But the governor will have none of it, or so he says.

He hath done all that he may, even to passing laws against Master Murray's trade; but now, it seems, Master Murray hath carried his case to the Lords of Trade, who have refused to approve the laws."

I thanked the man and pushed on through the crowd. So that was the story Murray was telling! And plainly he had the prestige and the following to make himself a dangerous force, even, as he had boasted, against the governor and the provincial authorities.

But on the outskirts of the gathering I chanced to overhear another conversation which indicated that Murray's hold upon public opinion was perhaps not so strong as my first informant had led me to believe.

"He hath the devil's own luck," murmured a prosperous-appearing citizen.

"Aye," said his neighbor bitterly; "they will ply a grand traffic over the Doom Trail."

The odd name, so sinister in its implication, struck my imagination. I lingered behind the two, pretending to peer over their heads.

"And 'tis these fools here who will pay for it in the long run," answered the other.

"And yourself and I," rejoined the second.

As I turned to leave, I met again the threatening glance of the red-haired giant which sought me out across the crowd. I tapped the nearest of the pair of disgruntled citizens upon the shoulder.

"Pray, sir, who is the tall fellow in buckskin on the steps?"

The man edged away from me as suspiciously as the first one I had accosted.

"I am a stranger in your town," I added.

" 'Tis a frontiersman," he replied reluctantly; "one called 'Red Jack' Bolling."

"An ugly knave," I commented.

But the citizen and his friend only eyed me askance, and I walked on, reflecting on the current of intrigue which I

had uncovered beneath the placid life of the little town within two hours of my landing.

I was walking through Bridge Street, with the leafing tree-boughs overhead and the walls of Fort George before me, when another and smaller crowd rounded the corner from the Broad-Way, a street which formed the principal thoroughfare of the town and took its name from the wide space between the house-walls.

In the lead came an Indian. He was the first of his race I chanced to see, and sure, 'tis strange that we were destined to be friends—aye, more than friends, brethren of the same Clan. He was a large man, six feet in his moccasins, and of about the same age as myself. He stalked along, arms swinging easily at his side, wholly impervious to the rabble of small boys who tagged behind, yelling and shrieking at him.

His handsome face, with its high-arched nose, was expressionless. His eyes stared straight in front of him. He wore the *ga-ka*, or breechcloth, and thigh-leggings of soft, tanned deerskin. A single eagle's-feather rose from the scalp-lock which hung from his shaven head.

He was naked from the waist up, and on his massive chest was painted in yellow and red pigments the head of a wolf. He wore no other paint, and he was weaponless, except for the tomahawk and knife which hung at his belt.

The children danced around him like so many little animals. They never touched him, but some of the more venturesome hurled pebbles from the walk at his brawny shoulders.

"Injun Jim came to town, with his breeches falling down," they chanted.

"Scalp-taker, scalp-taker," shrieked another.

"Big Injun drink much fire-water," howled a group.

"Injun dirt, Injun dirt, always 'feared that soap will hurt," proclaimed others.

I can not repeat all the catch-calls and rimes which they employed, some of them too disgusting for print. Sure, the

gamins of Paris, with their natural ability at verbal filth, might have listened respectfully to these children of a far province, attempting to humiliate one of the race who had formerly been lords of the whole land.

I looked to see some citizen intervene, but several who sat on their doorsteps or lounged in front of shops, smoking the inevitable pipe, viewed the spectacle with indifference or open amusement. And the Indian stalked along, his dignity unruffled through it all.

My wrath boiled over, and I charged down upon the tormentors.

"Be off," I shouted. "Have you no proper play to occupy your time?"

They fled hilariously, pleased rather than outraged by the attack, after the perverse habit of children who prefer always to be noticed instead of ignored. The citizens who had witnessed the persecution of the Indian chuckled openly at the discomfiture of his assailants, and then returned to their pipes.

I was proceeding on my way when I was dumfounded by hearing the Indian address me.

"Hold, brother," he said in perfect English, but with a certain thick guttural accent. "Ta-wan-ne-ars would thank you."

"You speak English!" I exclaimed.

A light of amusement gleamed in his eyes, although his face remained expressionless as a mask.

"You do not think of the Indian as these ignorant little ones do?" he asked curiously.

"I—I know nothing of your people," I stammered. "I am but this day landed here."

"My brother is an Englishman?" he questioned, not idly but with the courteous interest of a gentleman.

"I am."

"Ta-wan-ne-ars thanks you, Englishman." He extended his hand.

"Your kindness was the greater because you obeyed it by instinct."

I regarded him with increasing amazement. Who was this savage who talked like a London courtier?

"I helped you," I said, "because you were a stranger in a strange city, and by the laws of hospitality your comfort should be assured."

"That is the law of the Indian, Englishman," he answered pleasantly; "but it is not the law of the white man."

"It is the law our religion teaches," I remonstrated, feeling that I must defend this indictment of my race.

"Your religion teaches it to you and you try to apply it to yourselves," he objected. "But you do not even try to apply it to the Indian. The Indian is a savage. He is in the way of the white man. He must be pushed out."

I took his hand in mine.

"All white men do not feel so," I said.

"Not all," he assented. "But most."

"I go now," I continued, "to Governor Burnet. I shall ask him to make a law that Indians shall be as safe from mockery as from violence in New York."

"Governor Burnet is a good man. My brother will speak to friendly ears. He does not say '—— Injun' and 'dirty beast' because we live differently from him. He is a man."

"You call me brother," I said. "I have no friends in this land. May I call you brother?"

That wonderful expression of burning intelligence lighted his face again.

"My brother has befriended Ta-wan-ne-ars. Ta-wan-ne-ars is his friend and brother. Ta-wan-ne-ars will not forget."

He raised his right hand arm high in the gesture of greeting or farewell, and we separated.

IX

THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL

WHERE Garden Street[1] crosses the Broad-Way I met the town bellringer brandishing his bell. "'Tis Friday afternoon of the week," he bellowed, "and all householders shall take notice they must collect their refuse and offal and dump the same in the river or the swamps beyond the city limits. And they are to sweep the streets before their shops and dwellings and destroy or remove the sweepings after the same fashion. Proclaimed by order of the worshipful mayor and aldermen."

He was beginning his oration all over again, when I approached him with a request for the location of Captain van Horne's house.

"Do you but follow your nose straight before you," he directed me, "until you come to the red-brick mansion with the yellow-brick walk this side of the Green Lane.[2] That is his."

Except for the walk he had specified, the house the bellringer described had nothing about it to distinguish it from those adjacent, and I could not forbear a smile at thought of the different degrees of magnificence which were deemed necessary by the potentates of the Old World and the New.

The negro servant who answered my knock admitted that the governor was within.

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[1] Now Exchange Place.
[2] Now Maiden Lane.

"But Massa Burnet done hab de gen'lemen ob de Council wid him jus' now, sah," he added doubtfully.

"I am this minute landed with letters for the governor from London," I said.

"Oh, bery well, sah. Dat be a dif'runt matter. Yo' come dis way, please. Massa Burnet be plumb glad to see yo'. Dis way, please."

He ushered me into the wide hallway which ran from front to rear of the house, and knocked on the door of the first room on the right.

"Enter," roared a jovial bass voice.

The negro threw open a leaf of the door and stood aside.

"Dis gen'lemun done jus' lan' f'om London wif letters fo' yo' Ex'luncy," he announced.

I saw before me a group of eight men gathered around a dinner-table, which was spread with maps and papers in place of eatables. At the head sat the man of the bass voice, ruddy-faced, comfortable in girth, with the high forehead of the thinker and the square jaw of the man of action.

"I am Governor Burnet, sir," he said. "Who are you?"

"These letters will explain, your Excellency," I replied, not caring to reveal my identity before so many persons.

I tendered them to him.

"Hah, from Master Juggins!" he exclaimed with heightened interest. "You sailed on the *New Venture?*"

"Yes, your Excellency—with Master Murray."

"That is well. Be seated, sir; be seated," ordered the governor as he slit the packet.

I found a chair by the fireplace, and watched in silence whilst he read through the close-writ pages, with an occasional word or interjection to the others, who had risen from their places and were clustered about him. They were, as I afterward learned, the most prominent men of the governor's faction in the province, who strove to uphold his authority and aid him in his effort to clinch the control

of the fur-trade in English hands—Abraham van Horne, the governor's father-in-law; James Alexander, Robert Walter, Rip van Dam, a cousin to my friend, the proprietor of the George; John Barberie, Francis Harrison and Cadwalader Colden, the surveyor-general, he who later writ "The History of the Five Indian Nations," and who made himself remarkably acquainted with the history of provincial relations with the savages.

"So! Humph!"

The governor laid down the covering letter which accompanied the detailed report of the operations of Murray in London.

"You are Master——"

He examined the letter again.

"Humph! Yes."

His keen eyes deliberately scanned my face.

"I see. Better——"

He turned from me to his councilors.

"It is apparent from what Master Juggins has writ that Murray has triumphed, gentlemen, even if not so absolutely as he would have our citizens believe. However, we know the worst, and we may prepare for it. If I may have your indulgence, I would crave an adjournment of our meeting to enable me to discuss some aspects of the situation more intimately with Master Juggins' messenger."

There was a murmur of assent, followed by a scraping of chairs and fluttering of papers as the meeting broke up.

"One moment, your Excellency," I interposed. "I have also a letter from Master Juggins for the Honorable Cadwalader Colden of your Council—if he is here."

"Indeed, he is," assented the governor. "A moment, if you please, Colden."

A thin, bustling man, with very bright black eyes and a dark complexion, who had been sitting at the governor's right hand, detached himself from the exodus and resumed his chair. His nervous fingers quickly tore loose the enve-

lope of the letter I handed him, and he began devouring its contents, regardless of the confusion around him.

"Until tomorrow, gentlemen!"

The governor bowed the Council out, and shut the door upon the last of them. He beckoned me forward.

"Sit here beside us, Master Ormerod—for so I see you are rightly named, although you traveled under Master Juggins' name. Master Juggins vouches for you. That is sufficient for me. What say you, Colden?"

"Quite sufficient," agreed the surveyor-general. "Do you wish me to remain, sir?"

"Certainly. Glad to have you. This is no matter to be manhandled by the whole Council; but zooks, a man must have advice now and then, whether he takes it or not! Now, Master Ormerod, do you tell us as fully as you may what you know of Murray.

"Begin at the beginning. Spare nothing. Tell us how you yourself came into this.

"Master Juggins hath slated you for a prominent part. I respect his judgment, but more than our immediate fortune hinges upon the issue of what we do, and I must know all."

The while he was talking he walked to the fireplace, selected a clay pipe, walked back to his chair, crammed the pipe with tobacco and cracked flint and steel to a slow-match of wadding, with which he lighted it. Colden sat low down in his chair, finger-tips joined, drinking in everything which was said. He was like a vigilant terrier in his watchful eagerness.

I recounted the circumstances of my meeting with Juggins, the hearing before the Lords of Trade and the incidents of the voyage, not forgetting Tom's assault upon me and the strange bargain I had made with Murray.

"Then are you safe from denunciation," broke in the governor. "We think little of Hanoverian or Jacobite in New York. Here, Master Ormerod, you will find only Englishmen laboring to wrest a living from the wilderness

and to extend their country's power and richness. What you were matters little. 'Tis what you are we judge you by.

"The bargain was typical of Murray. He is no ordinary villain. Already he hath persuaded the discontented elements in the province that I would take the bread from their mouths by stopping his trade. But he knows well that I would leap upon the excuse to lay him by the heels, and he will see to it that no suspicion of your past escapes."

"He threatened me with the Red Death this morning," I said. "Can you tell me what he meant by it?"

The governor and Colden exchanged significant glances.

"Bolling hath been in the town this week past," remarked the latter.

"I saw him on my way here," I said. "Ah, then, 'tis——"

" 'Tis a saying of the frontier," explained the governor. "They call this red-headed Bolling and Murray's negro, Tom, the Red and the Black Deaths, for Murray is charged with having used them to remove from his path those persons he considers dangerous or whom he honors with his dislike."

"In the crowd attending Murray I also heard talk of the Doom Trail," I continued.

Governor Burnet smiled grimly.

"That is the popular name for the route by which Murray smuggles his trade-goods to Canada."

"But why the name, your Excellency?"

"Because 'tis said to be the sealing of a man's doom if he seeks the trail or any information concerning it. Is not that the story, Colden?"

" 'Tis a story which hath more than legend to substantiate it," agreed the surveyor-general.

"Has the traffic been suspended during Murray's absence?" I asked.

"No," replied the governor. "Bolling and Black Robe have kept it in motion."

"And who is Black Robe?"

The governor laughed outright.

"You are red-hot for dangerous information, Master Ormerod. Black Robe is the Indian's name for one Père Hyacinthe, a Jesuit missionary, who, according to some of the tales our agents bring, shares with Murray the credit for conception of the conspiracy we are debating.

"But where Murray plots for the overthrow of English rule in America in order to bring back the Jacobites and enrich himself, Black Robe's ambition is to establish France as the supreme temporal power in the world and to extend the influence of the Pope by making his religion universal on this continent as it is in South America."

"Sometimes I almost doubted the plot could be so formidable as Juggins claimed," I said; "but——"

"Master Ormerod," returned the governor earnestly, "it is the most formidable blow which ever was aimed at us. It is formidable because it is based on a clever idea, upon a sound conception of the economic situation, and because it is prepared in secret and those who should be alive to the alarms we have sounded not only refuse to heed us, but would stop our mouths, so that we may not any more annoy them.

"Today, thanks to the law I had passed, which the Lords of Trade have now suspended, trade-goods in Montreal cost twice what they do at Albany. And this, mind you, despite the secret trade which Murray plies. Without that aid the French would never be able to meet our competition."

"Where do Black Robe and Murray make their headquarters?" I inquired.

"Murray spends part of his time here in New York or in Albany, but most of the year he is absent. He says he is on trading-expeditions—and we may not disprove it. But we think he stays at a station which is said to form a depot for the stores smuggled over the Doom Trail. Black Robe is reported to have a chapel there."

"'Tis called La Vierge du Bois," added Colden.

"And where is it?"

"If I knew, I should order a levy of the militia and burn it down at risk of my head," retorted the governor.

"But you must have some idea where it is?" I pressed incredulously.

Governor Burnet put down his pipe and unrolled a large scroll map which lay amongst the papers on the table.

"You forget that you have left the Old World of limited spaces behind you," he replied. "This province over which I rule is greater than all Britain—how much greater not even our surveyor-general, who knows more than any other man, can say."

He spread the map before me, and I gazed with fascination at the courses of unknown rivers, chains of untraversed mountains, broad savannas the foot of the white man had seldom trod, lakes like seas and immense blank spaces without even a mark upon them to denote their character.

"This is New York, Master Ormerod. Our settlements are confined to the coast districts, the island of Nassau[1]—" he motioned toward the window—"and the valley of Hudson's River. We have barely begun the task of colonization. There is room here for every soul in England—and to spare."

With his pipe-stem he pointed to the upper left corner.

"All this country is virgin forest. On the north and northwest 'tis bounded by the inland sea which we call Lake Cadaraqui;[2] to the southeast stretch the Adirondack Mountains. Somewhere between those boundaries runs the Doom Trail. There are thousands of square miles of wilderness to search for it."

"And the Keepers of the Trail to guard its mystery," put in Colden.

"Who are they?" I questioned, as anxious as a small boy for further details.

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[1] Long Island.
[2] Lake Ontario.

"The *Ho-nun-ne-gwen-ne-yuh,*" he repeated. "So far as we know, Master Ormerod—and we know only what our agents have been able to learn at second and third hand—they are bands of mercenaries, Cahnuagas, Adirondacks and Shawendadies, all renegades of the Iroquois, who are retained by Murray to protect the Trail.

"They roam that belt of forest you saw depicted on the map, and 'tis death for them to find any man, white or red, within it, save he bears Murray's sign manual. The Indians are a superstitious people, and they have come to believe that there is some supernatural agency behind the Keepers of the Trail. In plain English, they fear the Trail is haunted."

"By what?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"You would have to make a more profound study of their folk-lore than I have been able to in order to comprehend the precise gist of their belief. But they tell us that the False Faces, a race of demons from the underworld, to whom Murray has sold his soul, have rallied to his aid."

"Ridiculous!" I exclaimed.

"No doubt," assented the surveyor-general; "but the superstition is a factor in the problem."

"At every turn we run against the shrewdness and wit of this fellow Murray," exploded the governor. " 'Tis at once a tribute to his ability, and perhaps an index to our inferiority, that we have never been able to secure certain information of his operations."

" 'Tis evident, your Excellency," I ventured, "that the Lords of Trade will accept only positive evidence that he hath evaded the law."

"That means legal proof of smuggling," reflected the governor.

"And now that the Lords of Trade have suspended our law, his operations are no longer illegal, strictly speaking," said Colden. "But I make no doubt he will continue to handle the bulk of his goods over the Doom Trail, for he

will not care to have his dupes in the province realize the enormous tribute they pay to France through him."

"The suspension of the law may well be permanent," I suggested. " 'Twas Master Juggins' conviction that Murray would scatter bribes right and left, at home and in London, to win his point. And he hath the French Treasury to draw upon."

Governor Burnet brought his fist down upon the table with a thud.

"Gadslife!" he swore. "There is naught for it but war! We must be after the dog! We must run him down! He hath Government at his orders. If he continues much longer as he doth today he may secure a petition to his majesty for my recall."

He sank back in his chair and stared reflectively at the map which was still spread out between us.

"It shall be done, gentlemen," he said more quietly after an interval of several minutes. "But we must move unofficially. What say you, Colden?"

"We can do nothing with official support," rejoined the surveyor-general, "and 'tis probable we shall receive the instructions of the Lords of Trade to suspend the law by the next Bristol packet."

"There can be no question of that," agreed the governor. "Well, the law shall be suspended. I will have the suspension publicly proclaimed. We will affect to mourn deeply over it. Aye, that is the course to pursue. Murray will grow bolder with his success, and we must put him off his guard."

He turned the pages of Juggins' letter.

"Then under cover we must concert the measures to be taken. That will be for Master Ormerod. Do you still crave the opportunity, knowing now the full measure of its perils, sir?"

"I am more anxious, if possible, sir," I answered. "Master Juggins was good enough to think I had the qualities for the venture. As you will have read, I have spent some years at Versailles and St. Germain. I speak French

sufficiently well to pass on the frontier for a Frenchman. As for danger—why, your Excellency, the man who has ruined his life can have no fear for it. He has all to gain and nothing to lose."

"True," assented the governor. "But you know nothing of woodcraft or the life amongst the savages."

"Master Juggins gave me a letter to one Peter Corlaer, a——"

Colden sat suddenly erect.

"Corlaer is now in the kitchen!" he exclaimed.

He turned to the governor.

"Peter came this morning with the Seneca chief, if your Excellency will remember."

"So he did. We will have him in."

Colden went out, and returned at once with two companions. One I recognized, to my amazement, as the Indian I had befriended an hour or two earlier. He greeted me with a faint smile. To the governor he rendered the splendid arm-high salute, and his deep voice boomed out—

"*Qua, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go!*"[1]

The other man was more like a tavern-keeper than a woodsman. Of a naturally large stature, he looked even larger than he was by reason of the fleshiness of his hogshead of a body.

At first glance he seemed all paunch, but when you studied him closely you saw that his fat was firm and hard and formed a sheathing for the most powerful set of muscles any man ever had. His face was tremendous, with little, insignificant features; but his eyes, behind the rolls of fat which almost masked them, twinkled with constant interest and animation, belying the air of stolid stupidity he affected.

"This is Corlaer, Master Ormerod," said the governor. "And with him is come a friend of ours, one of the two

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1 "Hail, Great Swift Arrow"—the Indians' name for the Governor of New York, whoever he might be.

war-chiefs of the Six Nations. Peter, Master Ormerod hath a letter for you from Master Juggins in London."

"*Ja,*" he said vacantly.

I handed him the letter. He turned it over and over in his hand and picked at the seal. Then he handed it to the Indian.

"You read idt," he said.

X

THE RED DEATH

I LOOKED from one to the other with astonishment; but 'twas the governor who intervened.

"Your pardon, Peter," he said good-humoredly enough, "but that letter happens to deal with a most confidential subject."

"Oh, *ja*," said Corlaer indifferently. "But I do not readt."

"Take the letter, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go," said the Indian. "Ta-wan-ne-ars does not seek your secrets. But you need have no fears. This young Englishman is Ta-wan-ne-ars' friend."

"How? What is that?" exclaimed the governor, much perplexed. "You know Master Ormerod?"

"Ta-wan-ne-ars knows not the Englishman's name," replied the Indian with his grave smile; "but he knows the Englishman's heart."

And in his sonorous English, with a slightly guttural intonation, he recounted how I had rescued him from his childish persecutors.

The incident recalled my promise, and I broke in impetuously upon his closing words.

"Aye, your Excellency, but he hath forgotten to add that I pledged myself to beseech you to make it illegal to mock at Indians in the city streets."

"An excellent thought," approved Colden. "We have trouble enough winning the friendship of the tribes without subjecting the visiting chiefs to humiliation in our midst."

"It shall be done at once," declared the governor.

He drew forward a fresh sheet of paper and hurriedly scrawled upon it the necessary instructions, then rang a bell and to the negro who answered said:

"Zach, do you carry this at once to Rollins the Bellman and bid him proclaim it through the streets at dusk upon his lights-round, and also at every general proclamation."

He returned his attention to the Indian.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars," he continued, "I need your friendship. I need the friendship of every one of your people for our King."

"Why," interposed the Indian, "has Go-weh-go-wa[1] become involved in war with some other king?"

"Not in a war with knife and tomahawk," answered the governor, "but in a secret struggle, wherein some of his own subjects are endeavoring to stab him in the back."

The Seneca drew himself erect.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars is your friend, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go. He is not the friend of Onontio[2] who rules at Quebec. Most of the white people are not well-wishers to the Indian, but you are of those we count our friends. I am come here with Corlaer to prove my friendship."

"How is that?" asked the governor with interest.

Colden and I leaned forward. Corlaer stood by the table in precisely the same position he had assumed when he gave the letter to the Indian. He had not moved a muscle. In his face only his little eyes, behind their ramparts of flesh, stirred with the animation of life.

"On the frontier 'tis said that Joncaire, the Frenchman who governs the trading-post by the Falls of Jagara,[3] is about to begin the building of a stone fort."

"A fort!" protested the governor. "Sure, 'tis impossible! 'Twould be a direct violation of the Peace of Utrecht."

"Why, we are still in negotiation with Paris over Jon-

[1] Literally, the Great Crown—Indian name for British ruler.
[2] The French Governor General of Canada, regardless of identity.
[3] Niagara.

caire's defiance of the treaty in establishing a trading-post upon ground allotted to us," cried Colden.

"Idt is true," spoke up Corlaer.

His voice was high and squeaky, and sounded ridiculous coming from such a giant.

"Hath the building begun?" demanded the governor.

"I think nodt. Ta-wan-ne-ars broughdt me der wordt at Onondaga. We comedt to you as fast as we couldt."

"Ta-wan-ne-ars came because it was partly the fault of his people that the French are settled by Jagara," said the Indian.

"Yes," replied the governor. "Onontio and Joncaire first made the Oneidas drunk, and then bargained with them to sell the Senecas' land."

"They had no right to do so," assented Ta-wan-ne-ars somberly. "But now will you believe that Ta-wan-ne-ars is your friend?"

"I believe," said the governor. "But I pray you tell me why you feel for us this friendship? When I came to New York to govern the province my predecessor told me that the experiment of having you educated by the missionaries had failed, that you had returned to the forest, closer wedded than ever to Indian ways."

The Indian's face lighted up again with that grave smile which showed itself with scarcely a contraction of the muscles.

"Yes, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, it failed to win Ta-wan-ne-ars from the ways of his people. Those ways are best for the Indian. You can not take a people like mine, who have lived in the wilderness as long as they can remember, and remake them in a few years so that they can live like white men.

"Once, your histories say, your people lived like mine. Well, I think it will take as long to bring the red man to your present ways as it has taken yourselves to reach them.

"But Ta-wan-ne-ars learned that of the two white races

the English were the kindest to the Ho-de-no-sau-nee.[1] The French always have persecuted us. They try by most subtle means to convert us to their religion, which is not any better than our own religion. The English come to us bluntly and say, 'Be Christians,' and if we do not wish to be they let us alone.

"The French always have fought with us. The English have aided us. The French pay little for our furs; the English pay much.

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, I think the white man can never be an honest friend to the Indian, for he wants what the Indian has; but Ta-wan-ne-ars prefers the Englishman to the Frenchman, whatever may be the issue.

"*Na-ho!*"[2]

I can give no adequate conception of the impressiveness with which this speech was delivered by a savage speaking in a tongue strange to him. Every word rang in my ears.

"Who is this man?" I whispered to Colden as he finished.

"He is one of the two war-chiefs of the Iroquois League, both of whom are Senecas. His name, which signifies 'Needle-Breaker,' is actually a form of title which goes with the office. Moreover, he is nephew to the Roy-an-eh Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, who is Guardian of the Western Door of the Long House."

"He is what is called a sachem?" I asked curiously.

"There is no such title in use amongst the People of the Long House," replied the learned surveyor-general. " 'Tis an Algonquin word, I believe. The Iroquois equivalent is *roy-an-eh,* the title I gave to the uncle of Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"But our friend here has no such rank. The *roy-an-ehs* are hereditary nobles, the title descending by the female line and generally from uncle to nephew. 'Tis quite possible, of course, that Ta-wan-ne-ars will succeed his uncle in due course. Indeed, the fact that he hath been named

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[1] The people of the Long House—Indian name for Iroquois.
[2] "I have finished."

principal war-chief of the League, with the charge of guarding the Western Door, would almost indicate as much.

"He was taken as a youth and given to the missionaries—with the result that you see."

He broke off, for the governor was addressing me.

"Have you any objection, Master Ormerod, to my acquainting the chief and Corlaer with what we have been discussing?"

I shook my head.

"Very well."

He turned to the Indian.

"The letter which you hold in your hand, Ta-wan-ne-ars, is from Master Robert Juggins, of London, who was some time in the province when you were a lad."

"I remember Master Juggins," interrupted Ta-wan-ne-ars. "He sent me my first musket. Is this Englishman his friend?"

"Yes," said the governor. "He comes direct from Master Juggins, recommended to me for use in the plight I find myself in."

"I will help the Englishman," agreed Ta-wan-ne-ars eagerly.

He smiled at me.

"This Englishman is honest. He is kind. If he fights, I will aid him."

"Do you see?" whispered Colden in my ear. "You have saved an Indian from ridicule. In his estimation that is a greater service than rescue from the stake."

"But you know nothing of the cause I am enlisting you in," protested the governor.

"That matters little," said Ta-wan-ne-ars composedly. "If you and this Englishman and Colden are in it, it is an honest cause. What say you, Corlaer?"

"It vill pe goodt enough for me," declared the Dutchman solemnly.

The governor laughed.

"My friends and I do thank you for the compliment you

do us, Ta-wan-ne-ars. But I must lay our case before you, for we seek your counsel. Do you know that Andrew Murray is landed today and that he hath secured the consent of the Lords of Trade in London to the suspension of our law against the exporting of trade-goods to Canada?"

Both the Indian and Corlaer were startled from their customary stoical attitudes.

"Yes," continued the governor, "Murray landed this morning, together with a French officer, the Chevalier de Veulle, who——"

He stopped at sight of the passion in the Seneca's face. But 'twas Corlaer who spoke first.

"That is fery stranche news, gofenor, for on der frontier there is talk that an enfoy is coming to deliver a message to der tribes at Jagara from der King of France. Joncaire is calling a grandt council to meetd in der Summer. All der Indians from beyondt der Lakes and der West vill come."

"Strange news!" repeated the governor. "You may well say so! Murray overrides our law; Joncaire sets out to build a stone fort upon our soil at Jagara; the French King sends an officer, experienced on the frontier, with a special message for a grand council of the tribes.

"All these three events come simultaneously. 'Tis impossible that accident so disposed them. Here we have the first indication of the culmination of the plot. Aye, 'tis graver than I had supposed."

Ta-wan-ne-ars laid down the unopened letter from Juggins upon the table.

"Let some other read this," he said. "But it serves no purpose. This Englishman and Ta-wan-ne-ars are brothers. Corlaer, too, will take the Englishman into his friendship—not because he carried this writing across the sea, but because he is a man to be trusted. So much is to be read in his face. And now, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, I would ask that Ta-wan-ne-ars may retire. What you have told me has clouded my heart with hatred, and I may not think straight."

His right arm swept up in the gesture of farewell, and the door closed upon his bronzed back.

"What hath happned to irk him so?" inquired the governor in surprize.

"Idt was this de Veulle who ran away with der dotter of his uncle, Do-ne-ho-ga-weh," replied Corlaer, stirred again from his habitual silence.

"I remember," interposed Colden. " 'Twas some four years ago. I remember having seen the maid at a council at Albany. She was called Ga-ha-no,[1] a pretty child and wondrous dainty for an Indian."

Corlaer seemed to ponder momentarily.

"I haf been many years with der Indians, gofenor; but nefer didt I see redt people lofe as we do. They know not what passion is. But Ta-wan-ne-ars was different. If he learnedt nothing else from her missionaries he learnedt to lofe der white man's way."

" 'Tis a sad story," commented the governor. "Is it certain de Veulle took her?"

"He didt not take her. She ran away with him."

"The chief will not attempt to take revenge here?"

Corlaer smiled.

"He will wait many years, if he must, to refenge himself in his own way."

"I wonder what became of her," I said. " 'Tis only some three years since de Veulle appeared in Paris."

Corlaer shrugged his shoulders.

"Suppose you findt der Doom Trail andt come to La Vierge du Bois. Maybe then you know."

"That is exactly what we wish to do, Corlaer!" exclaimed the Governor.

"You don't want much, gofernor," replied the big man dryly.

"Do you think it can not be done?"

Corlaer reflected, ponderous as a sleepy moose.

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1 Hanging Flower.

"Idt has not been done."

"Does that necessarily mean it never will be done?"

"No, but——"

"But what?"

"It will take much time andt money—andt then all depends upon der Indians."

"What Indians?"

The governor was extremely patient with the mental processes of the frontiersman.

"Der Six Nations."

"Why do you specify them?"

Again Corlaer was buried in thought. And I saw that his eyes, which ordinarily twinkled, now smoldered with a slow-burning fire.

"If we findt der Trail, gofernor, what then? We haf der Keepers. They are a strong bandt. We must fight them. You can not sendt soldiers. That wouldt be war. We must fight them with Indians. Andt what Indians couldt you get but der Iroquois?"

"Can we get the Iroquois?"

"I do not know," confessed Corlaer. "But if you get them, you smash der Trail."

"I see," said the governor. "Yes, there is every reason why the Iroquois should join us. Look you, Corlaer, this is the obvious plan of the French. With Murray's aid they will cram their magazines with trade-goods this Summer. They will make an impressive showing for the tribes that attend Joncaire's council. They will push ahead the building of the fort at Jagara. Once that is finished, they will have a curb on the necks of the Iroquois. They will be able to hold up the fleets of fur canoes from the Upper Lakes that now pass down to our post at Oswego on the Onondaga's River. In two seasons they will have wrested the trade entirely from our hands, and then if they are ready they can strike with musket and scalping-knife.

"And who, think you, will bear the brunt of the first

blow? Who but the Iroquois, whom the French have dreaded since Champlain's day?"

"True, only too true," murmured Colden.

"Yes," assented Corlaer; "you haf der right of it, gofernor. What is your plan?"

"I shall send this young man"—he laid his hand on my arm—"with you and Ta-wan-ne-ars to spy out the ground at Jagara, to search the wilderness for signs of the Trail, to work upon the Iroquois in our interest. Master Ormerod knows naught of forest warfare, but he hath had experience with the French and he knows de Veulle of old."

"When do we start?" replied Corlaer simply.

"So soon as may be. I must see Ta-wan-ne-ars again and concert certain matters with Master Ormerod. But within the week you must leave for Albany. You need spare no expense, Peter. My own funds are pledged to this, and Master Juggins, too, is offering his aid."

Corlaer deliberately donned his cap of fur.

"It will not be money, but friendship andt hate will serfe your turn, gofernor," he said.

"You have not yet read the letter from Juggins," I reminded him as he walked toward the door.

"So I haf not," he admitted, and took the letter from me and slipped it inside his leather shirt.

"Will you have it read?" asked Colden.

"No, der young man is all right. Ta-wan-ne-ars has chudged him."

With that he was gone, and a sense of bewilderment stole over me. It seemed incredible that either of the two odd characters of the wilderness with whom I had talked could really have existed.

But Governor Burnet lost no time in doubts. He paced the room, rubbing his hands together with satisfaction.

"We have done well, Colden. We could not have done better. Master Ormerod, you were indeed fortunate in going to the help of the Seneca. You earned, not only his friendship, but that of Peter as well. No letter from Jug-

gins could have served you so handily. Peter hath the mind of an Indian for all his white face, and he looks at things as they do. He likes you."

"I can scarce believe in my good fortune," I replied. "'Tis a change for the better, and a marked one, believe me, your Excellency."

"You are to be congratulated," he returned heartily. "But I must ask you to excuse me. I have much work to do. Pray grant me the pleasure of your company for dinner tomorrow. Colden, will you show Master Ormerod out?"

It was dusk in the streets, a soft purple dusk that became velvet darkness under the trees; and I felt in no humor to return to the drab company which the tavern offered. I was lifted out of myself by a mood of exaltation. After years which had been starred with humiliation, penury, discontent, I saw opening before me the golden path of adventure.

I drank in the tree smells and the odor of the ground underfoot, and longed for the great forests I had traced on the governor's map. And so I wandered at hazard until I found myself in an alley leading down to the waterfront—and heard of a sudden the thud of flying feet. I spun around in time to see a monstrous bulk come sailing through the air, knife and tomahawk whirling in either hand.

"I'll kill yer, varmint," howled an ugly voice. "I'll cut yer heart out and skin yer and take yer scalp!"

I dodged the knife and grappled the wrist which swung the tomahawk, twisting myself behind him so as to hinder his attack. But he was far stronger than I and slung me back in front of him as if I were a sack of chaffed wheat. I still clung to his tomahawk hand and contrived to knock up another blow of his knife, but he must have disemboweled me in the next vicious sweep of the blade.

"Hah-yah-yah-eeee-eee-ee-e!"

The ferocious yell made my blood run cold. It startled

my assailant even more. His muscles slackened just long enough for me to leap clear of him.

"——!" he snarled.

He drew one arm back to hurl his knife at me, but something whirred past my shoulder and his head jerked violently to one side. There was a sharp clang, and he fled precipitately, shouting curses.

Against the near-by house-wall a small, bright object glimmered through the shadows, and I stooped to snatch it up—only to leap instantly erect as a voice spoke at my elbow.

"My brother was in danger," said the voice quietly. "Ta-wan-ne-ars saw the Red Death follow Ormerod from the Governor's House, so Ta-wan-ne-ars followed him."

The tall figure of the Seneca was scarcely discernible in the gloom.

"Was it Bolling?" I asked.

He raised the shining object from the ground. It was his tomahawk, and curled about the blade was a lock of greasy red hair. He pointed to it.

"That time Ta-wan-ne-ars missed," he said grimly. "Some day the light will be better—and Ta-wan-ne-ars will not miss."

"Although you missed, you saved my life," I answered warmly. " 'Tis an obligation I shall not forget."

He laid his fingers to his lips.

"Hark," he said.

I listened, and from the water-front came the thunderous voice of the bellman.

"Half-after-eight-o'clock, and a fine night with a southwest breeze. And all householders are cautioned they shall set out their lanthorns, and if any nightwalker shall injure the same he shall be fined twenty pounds for each offense and jailed in the Bridewell.

"And his Excellency the governor is pleased to proclaim that whereas divers persons have mocked, assailed or sought to humiliate Indian visitors to the city, the governor has

made a rule that such persons, upon apprehension, shall be set in the stocks for twelve hours the first time and upon the second offense shall be publicly whipped at the cart's tail along the Broad-Way."

Ta-wan-ne-ars replaced his tomahawk in its sheath.

"There is no talk of obligations between brothers," he said. "Come, we will walk together to your tavern."

XI

TA-WAN-NE-ARS UNDERSTANDS

"NO, WE will go to Murray's tavern," I said. "I will ask him if he thinks he can commit assassination here in the town as he does in the forest."

"Good," rejoined Ta-wan-ne-ars impassively. "I will accompany my brother there."

I remembered that de Veulle lodged at Cawston's, and hesitated.

"Let my brother Ormerod be at ease," added the Indian. "Ta-wan-ne-ars has mastered his hatred."

"Very well," I replied. "I shall be glad of your company, but we must not be tempted to violence. There are reasons for my meekness."

"It would not be courteous for Ta-wan-ne-ars to slay his enemy in New York when he is the guest of Ga-en-gwa-ra-go," returned the Seneca as he walked lightly beside me.

"I, too, hate your enemy," I said.

He was silent for as much as ten paces.

"My brother means de Veulle?" he asked.

"Yes; I once crossed swords with him."

"And he lives! Did he wound my brother?"

I recounted briefly the circumstances of the duel at the Toison d'Or. He made no comment until I had finished.

"I am glad my brother spared him," he said then. "For Ta-wan-ne-ars has often prayed to Ha-wen-ne-yu, the Great

Spirit, to give him the life of this man who lives as though he were one of the fiends of the Ga-go-sa.[1]

"It is a bond between us that we have the same enemy. We did not need such a bond, Ormerod, but it is a proof that we were meant to be brothers."

At the next corner we met the bellman, trotting heavily.

"A citizen tells me he hath heard a horrid screech," he panted. "Do you know aught——"

"Yes," I told him. "I was attacked by a desperado named Bolling——"

"God save us, I knew there would be mischief with that villain in our midst!" interrupted the bellman.

"There would have been sore mischief done had not this Indian, who is visiting the governor, come to my aid," I rejoined.

"Did you slay the man?" asked the bellman apprehensively.

"No; he fled."

" 'Tis a savage rogue, and a deadly. Gadslife, my master, but you had a fortunate escape. I will run to the watch house and give an alarm. Aye, we should have a file of soldiers from the fort. This is no easy task that is set for us. I will——"

His threats and adjurations died away in the distance, as he hurried on, his regular duties forgotten.

"What think you hath become of Bolling?" I asked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"He is beyond the city limits, brother. There are no palisades for him to pass, and flight will be easy. He must have had a swift horse in readiness, for he would have been obliged to flee equally had he slain you."

"Will they catch him?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars laughed briefly, a trick he had which I afterward discovered to be rare, although not unknown, amongst the Indians.

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[1] False Faces.

"Those who are charged with his pursuit? No, brother; as well might the beaver pursue the wild pigeon. He will be buried in the wilderness tomorrow. But some day Ta-wan-ne-ars will come up with him—or perhaps it may be you, Ormerod. That will be a bad day for the Red Death."

At Cawston's we looked in vain for Murray or any of his party in the taproom and ordinary, so without a word to the servants we ascended the stairs to the upper floor. In the hall I halted momentarily, considering which door to knock upon, when the puzzle was solved by the opening of the one by which we stood.

My Lady Green Cloak appeared, and she started back in amazement, tinged with fear, at sight of me and the stalwart, half-naked figure of the Seneca, arms folded across his painted chest, his eagle's-feather reaching almost to the ceiling.

I bowed to her.

"Good evening, Mistress Murray," I said. "I am come with my friend for a word with your father."

"He is engaged," she answered quickly.

"That may be, but I must speak with him on a matter of much importance."

"What is that, sir?"

She began to recover her self-possession.

"What interest have you in common?" she added.

"None, save it be to dislike the other," I replied. "But I am obliged to ask your father for the second time if he condones assassination in the dark."

Her eyes widened with horror, then darkened with stony anger.

"Sir, you are monstrous impertinent!" she exclaimed. "How dare you suggest such a thing?"

"Because it occurred a quarter-hour past."

"And because you are assailed by some foot-pad in a disreputable part of the town, is that a reason for you to charge Master Murray with assassination?" she demanded with high contempt.

"Oh, I have proof," I said airily.

But my anger grew with hers. It maddened me that this girl, who I knew was honest, should be arrayed against me, should hold for me the contempt of a clean woman for a man she deemed a traitor.

"Look you, Mistress Murray," I went on haughtily. "The watch are now searching for your father's emissary. The garrison are to be turned out. Any moment Master Murray is like to receive a summons to go before the governor. He has overplayed his hand this time. He——"

The door behind her opened again, and Murray himself came out.

"I thought I heard voices——— Ah, Master Juggins——"

"Ormerod," I interrupted suavely.

His eyebrows expressed polite astonishment.

"To be sure. Forgive my stupidity. It hath gone so far as that already, hath it?"

"It hath gone so far as attempted assassination—for the second time," I retorted.

"Assassination? Tut, tut," he rebuked me. "Master Ormerod, you use strong language. And who in this little town of ours would seek to murder a gentleman new-landed like yourself?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars stepped to the front.

"Does Murray know this scalp?"

He permitted an end of the lock of Bolling's hair to show through his clinched fingers.

Marjory shrank back in terror. Murray's face became convulsed with passion.

" 'Sdeath!" he swore. "If Bolling is dead by this savage's hand I shall know the wherefore of it! What? Do the Iroquois take scalps within the city?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars laughed, and slowly opened his fist to reveal the single lock of hair.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars only takes the scalps of honorable warriors," he said in his smooth, low-pitched voice. "But the

Red Death escaped tonight by the width of these hairs. Does Murray think Ga-en-gwa-ra-go would have been angry with Ta-wan-ne-ars if the tomahawk had struck true?"

Murray wiped beads of perspiration from his face.

"So 'twas Bolling!" he muttered. "Curse the knave! What hath he done?"

"No more than attempted to murder me, sir—as I have attempted to tell you," I answered ironically.

Marjory came forward, hands clasped in expostulation.

"It isn't so! It can't be so! Tell him he lies, sir!" she pleaded with Murray.

He put her gently to one side.

"Peace, peace, my dear," he said. "You do not understand."

"But Bolling is the man you called 'Red Jack!' " she expostulated. "You presented me to him. You told him to be sure to remember my face. You jested about his hair and his evil looks."

"The man is likewise called 'The Red Death,' Mistress Murray," I said.

She turned to me, tears in her eyes.

"Oh, sir, pray you, do not bait me!" she cried. "I would not believe you before, but that is the man's hair, beyond a doubt."

"And what if it is?" said Murray kindly, drawing her to him with one arm. "Is that any reason why you should express shame?"

"But he was one of your people, sir. You told me——"

"Tut, tut, my dear Marjory. You are new to this New World of ours. The frontier is not like Scotland. We must work with what tools we find. I say it to my sorrow" —and he said it furthermore without even the twitch of an eyelid—"I am compelled occasionally to consort with men I might prefer to do without."

He gave his attention once more to me.

"In a word, Master Ormerod, what hath happened that you approach me in so hostile a spirit?"

"In a word, Master Murray," I replied, "your man Bolling, or 'The Red Death,' as he seems to be known in these parts, tried to kill me with knife and hatchet this evening."

"I am constrained to believe you," he said with an appearance of much sorrow, "but I can not hold myself responsible, sir."

"It may be that the governor will not be so indulgent," I commented sarcastically.

Murray drew himself erect.

"Sir," he replied, "as it happens, Bolling quarreled with me this afternoon in the presence of half a dozen well-known citizens of the town, and I dismissed him from my service."

"Pardon me," I said with a laugh, "if I express some——"

"Do you step within," he responded with celerity. "I shall be glad if you will satisfy yourself by questioning witnesses of the dispute. Marjory, will you——"

"I will stay," she said positively.

He shrugged his shoulders and stood aside. I motioned to Marjory, and she reëntered first. I walked next, and the Seneca followed me, one hand resting on his knife-hilt.

Murray shut the door behind us, and I found myself in a large room, sufficiently lighted by candles. Five or six men, who had been talking at a table, looked up with interest as we came in. One of them was de Veulle, and I felt rather than saw the massive frame of Ta-wan-ne-ars gather itself together exactly as does the wildcat when he sights his quarry.

The others I did not know. Murray introduced them by names which meant nothing to me, but later Ta-wan-ne-ars told me they were respectable merchants identified with the faction in the province who were hostile to Governor Burnet, and all were for the closest trade relations with Canada.

These men greeted us civilly enough, and gave most of their attention to Ta-wan-ne-ars. De Veulle acknowledged

the meeting by a smile that was tinged with mockery. Our clash came when Murray turned to me, after recounting my errand, and said:

"Your companion is evidently a chief, Master Ormerod. Will you identify him?"

Before I could say anything Ta-wan-ne-ars responded for himself.

"I am Ta-wan-ne-ars, of the Clan of the Wolf, war-chief of the Senecas, and nephew to Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, the Guardian of the Western Door of the Long House."

He spoke directly to de Veulle, and the Frenchman's eyes shifted from his level glance.

"Must we have an Indian present?" he muttered. "This is a white man's affair."

"As it happens, this Indian saved my life from a white man's knife," I replied quickly. "He is my brother. I would rather have him here than a woman-stealer."

But I had reckoned without Marjory. She took the situation out of my hands.

"Sir," she said, "you seem to delight in slandering gentlemen who are not disloyal to their faiths. I beseech you, have done. 'Tis a sorry business, and gains naught for you. Get forward with what brought you here."

I marked the relief that shone in de Veulle's eyes. I marked, too, the penetrating glance which Ta-wan-ne-ars bent upon her face. For myself, although I felt sick at heart, I said nothing. There was nothing which I could say.

I turned to Murray again.

"This conversation must be painful to us," I said. "Let us make an end to it. Bolling attacked me, as you know. My friend and brother here saved me and drove him away. We have a lock of Bolling's hair in proof of the attempt.

"The watch are now searching for Bolling. The governor will shortly be apprised. 'Tis in your interest to do what you can to clear yourself of responsibility for so dastardly a crime."

One of the merchants at the table, a very decent-appear-

ing man, soberly dressed and with much good sense in his face, caught me up.

"'Tis not strange that you should have come to Master Murray after such an attempt as you mention, sir," he began in conciliatory fashion. "But fortunately we were present this afternoon when Master Murray dismissed the man from his employ, in consequence of evidence of his dishonesty and misdealing during Master Murray's absence. Bolling left in a great rage, vowing he would put Master Murray in trouble."

"Aye," spoke up a second merchant, "and sure, the knave must have attacked you hoping 'twould be brought against Master Murray."

"Not to speak of the fact he was in great need of funds, Master Murray having refused to grant certain demands he made," suggested a third.

I bowed.

"Gentlemen," I said, "I am satisfied—that Master Murray hath a stout case. There is no more need be said."

"Ah, but there is more to be said," flared Marjory. "Think shame of yourself, sir, to be forever believing against others motives which you know yourself to be laden with. You were once an honorable man. Why do you not mend your ways and regain the self-respect of your kind?"

"God send there be an honorable man to hand when your need comes, mistress," I said. "Good evening, gentlemen."

Murray escorted us to the door.

"I must congratulate you," he said in a low voice. "Faith, you are an enterprising young man. You are doing famously in your new surroundings."

"But I shall not suffer another such attempt as tonight's to pass unanswered," I replied.

"Sure, sir," he said earnestly, "can you not bethink yourself of some trouble in your past which might bring down these troubles upon you!"

I laughed despite myself.

"I can," I agreed. "And so can you. But I would risk

denunciation at an extremity, Murray. Red Jack sought the protection of the wilderness. So might I."

"You are safe," he returned. "Believe me or not. 'Tis true."

"You hear?" I said to Ta-wan-ne-ars beside us.

He smiled gravely.

"My brother is safe," he agreed, "for Ta-wan-ne-ars will watch."

"You are thrice fortunate," Murray congratulated me. "You have won the confidence of the noble red man."

Ta-wan-ne-ars looked squarely at him.

"He will win the confidence of the red man, Murray, because he speaks straight. But you speak with the tongue of an Englishman, and think with the mind of a Frenchman."

Murray smiled.

"But always to my own interest, Ta-wan-ne-ars. Well, good luck to the two of you. And do not permit the Keepers to take you alive."

His smile became a sardonic grin.

"The Keepers have their own way with prisoners, you know. 'Tis part of their reward—or so the story goes."

I felt a shock of revulsion against the man. And he was the father of Marjory!

"You double-dyed scoundrel!" I ripped out at him.

"Have I touched your nerves?" he gibed. "Zooks, how sad! Well, I have company. I will bid you good evening."

The door shut behind his mocking grin, and we descended the stairs to the street. Ta-wan-ne-ars walked beside me without speaking until we had left the tavern.

"I understand your thoughts, my brother," he said suddenly. "We go upon the same quest."

"Quest?" I repeated. "What quest?"

"We each seek a soul which is lost, a sick soul."

I remembered his rage against de Veulle, and caught his meaning.

"Yes, that is true of you, Ta-wan-ne-ars. But there is no soul which I have the right to seek."

"Nevertheless, my brother would find the soul of the maiden and guard it," he insisted. "I have seen."

"But I may not help her," I objected. "She will have none of me."

"O my brother," he answered, "once there was one of my people who loved a maiden. And this maiden's soul was taken away by illness and went to dwell with Ata-ent-sic, the Goddess of Lost Souls, who rules the Land of Lost Souls which is behind the Setting Sun. The warrior was bidden in a dream to seek the maiden's soul, and he journeyed for three months to the Setting Sun, past the Abode of Evil, where dwells Ha-ne-go-ate-geh, the Evil Spirit.

"And when he came to the Land of Souls he found his maiden's soul dancing with the other lost souls in a bark cabin before Ata-ent-sic. And Jous-ke-ha, the grandson of Ata-ent-sic, who was a very old man, brought him a pumpkin which had been hollowed out, and told him to place the maiden's soul within. And he did so. And he returned to his people, and made a feast, and after the feast they raised up the maiden's soul out of the pumpkin shell."

He stopped under a flickering lanthorn, which cast a feeble light before the George.

"Surely, my brother, we shall not have to travel so dreadful a journey to regain the souls which we seek?"

I saw the grave smile, with a hint of pleading, on his face; and I reached out and caught his hand.

"Whatever be the end of my search, brother," I said, "I will go to the setting sun, and beyond if need be, to aid you to find the soul which you seek."

"The same words are in my heart, brother," he replied simply.

XII

INTO THE WILDERNESS

"BOLLING hath disappeared," said Governor Burnet. "You will not see him again, save it be in the dining-room of Captain van Horne's house where the governor worked pending the refurbishing of his official residence within the walls of the Fort.

"I have given orders to all officers of troops and town officials that he is to be detained if he ventures to appear," he continued; "but the knave—or, I should say his master—is too wise. By the way, an express arrived from Fort Orange[1] last night and reported having spoken Murray's party in the Tappan Zee. He will be a good three days ahead of you, 'twould seem."

"I am not sorry," I answered. "Have you any further instructions for me, sir?"

"Aye. Are you ready to sail?"

"Corlaer just now told me all our gear was aboard the sloop. Ta-wan-ne-ars is watching it."

The governor unfolded the map of the wilderness country which he had exhibited to me during my first visit.

"Above everything else, I must know what is happening at Jagara," he said. "The Doom Trail may wait. The news which Ta-wan-ne-ars brought of the intent of the French to replace Joncaire's trading-post with a stone fort is the most menacing tidings we have had since the peace was signed. It makes manifest what I have always con-

[1] Albany.

tended: that there can be no real peace whilst we and the French sit cheek by jowl, each striving for more power than the other.

"Peace on paper there may be; but the French will be breaking it, as they have done in the case of Joncaire's post and as they now plan to do by building a fort upon English territory. I must know what they do there, Master Ormerod. I must know beyond a doubt. I can not afford to accept merely the hearsay evidence of the Indians. I must have a man I can trust who will see for himself on the spot."

"Surely, Corlaer——"

The governor brushed away my suggestion.

"Corlaer can not speak French. Moreover, if he could, his face is known along the whole frontier. He and Joncaire are old opponents. No; if he ventured to the post without safe-conduct he would disappear. If he went with a safe-conduct he would see nothing. 'Tis you who must go.

"Masquerade as a Frenchman. There are plenty of lads who go out every year to Canada to have a try at the fur-trade. You should be able to pass for one of them. At any rate 'tis worth the attempt."

" 'Tis well worth trying," I agreed. "Also, 'tis possible I may pick up some news of the Trail from Joncaire."

"Possible," he assented; "but keep the Trail in the back of your mind. 'Tis this fort which concerns me now. For look you, Master Ormerod, if I secure proof the French meditate in earnest so grave a breach of the treaty 'twill strengthen by so much my case against Murray. Then might I dare indeed to stir the Iroquois to hostilities against him, as Peter suggested."

"I will do what I may," I promised, rising.

" 'Tis well. And be not reluctant to accept advice from Corlaer and the Indians. They are schooled in the forest's craft. Here, too, is a letter to Master Livingston, the Mayor of Fort Orange, and Peter Schuyler, a gentleman of that place who acts upon occasion as my deputy in frontier

affairs. You may talk freely with them concerning your mission. Good-by, sir, and be vigilant."

He gave me a hearty clasp of the hand and bowed me out. In the street Corlaer awaited me.

"Der tide is flooding," he said, and without another word set off at a good round pace.

We came presently to a wharf at the foot of Deye Street, where lay the sloop *Betsy,* her sails unstopped, land-lines slack. She cast off as we stepped aboard, and presently I was looking back over her stern at the dwindling sky-line of the quaint little city. As I looked I recognized the masts of the *New Venture* amongst the shipping in the East River anchorage, and a pang smote me with the realization that she was my last tie with the England which would have none of me and for which I hungered with the perverse appetite of one who is denied his greatest wish.

The masts and their tracery of rigging soon merged in the blue of the afternoon sky; the woods closed down around the scattered buildings of the Out Ward; and we sailed a broad channel which ran between lofty heights of land, reaching hundreds of feet above us like the walls of some gigantic city of the future, fairer and more stupendous than the mind of man had ever dreamed on.

All that afternoon we sailed with a quartering wind, but in the night it shifted and we were compelled to anchor. In the morning we proceeded, but our progress was slow, and with darkness we must anchor again. So likewise on the next day a storm beat down upon us from the hulking mountains which rimmed the wide expanse of the river called by the old Dutch settlers the Tappan Zee; and with only a rag of sail we sped for shelter under the lee of an island.

On the fourth day the river bore us through a country of low, rolling hills and plains that lifted to mountainous heights in the distance There were farms by the water's edge, and sometimes the imposing mansion of a patroon with its attendant groups of buildings occupied by servants,

slaves and tenants. Several times we passed villages, and occasionally a sloop similar to our own hailed us and exchanged the latest news of the river.

On the fifth day toward sunset we sighted in the distance the stockades of Fort Orange, which the English were beginning to call Albany, nestling close to the river-bank under the shelter of a steep hillock. We made the tottery pier after darkness had fallen, and hastened up into the town, delegating to the master of the sloop and his boy the task of conveying our baggage to the tavern kept by Humphrey Taylor.

Corlaer and I left Ta-wan-ne-ars at the tavern to receive the baggage, whilst we called upon Mayor Livingston. He was preparing for his bed, but on my sending up word by the slave that I carried a letter from the governor he tucked his shirt into his breeches and came down to us. From him we learned that Murray had spent but twenty-four hours in the town and was gone two days since.

"Did he say where?" I inquired curiously.

Master Livingston chuckled.

"He caused to be circulated that he was going upon a round of his 'trading-stations' to correct some slackness which had developed during his absence. 'Tis his usual excuse when he disappears."

"He was not alone?"

"No. He was accompanied by a Frenchman and that scoundrel, Tom, as well as by some misguided young female."

"She was his daughter," I said.

"So he said, I believe," agreed Master Livingston negligently.

"But I am sure she is," I insisted. "There can be no doubt——"

"Then I am vastly sorry for her lot," he replied good-humoredly.

"Which way didt he go?" asked Corlaer.

"The usual way. He followed the Iroquois Trail to the

Mohawk, then struck north. We have followed him so far many times; but always when our scouts have pressed the pursuit they have encountered strange bands of warriors who have killed or captured them or driven them away."

"Did you see aught of the Frenchman?" I struck in.

"Yes; he did me the honor of calling upon me, and said he was on a mission from his King to report upon the conduct of the Government of Canada, especially with a view to the maintenance of good relations with our colonists."

"The hypocrite!" I interjected.

"He was smooth of tongue, I grant you," admitted Master Livingston. "He had the grace to acquaint me he was taking advantage of Master Murray's company to secure protection through the frontier."

"Didt Murray hafe many men?" put in Corlaer.

"Half a dozen whites of Bolling's kind, and as many nondescript Indians who were painted like Mohicans."

"They wouldt be Cahnuagas," amended Corlaer.

"Yes," assented the Mayor; "but if you are to go to Jagara, as the governor's letter advises me, you need not concern yourself with Murray at this time. What do you propose to do?"

"We have discussed the journey on the voyage up the river," I replied; "and we are agreed 'tis best that we go first to the Seneca country, where Ta-wan-ne-ars can pick up the latest news. There we can concert our plan in detail and decide how best I am to be able to gain Joncaire's confidence."

"You are wise to be cautious," said Livingston. "Joncaire is no easy man to fool. Believe me, sir, he is the ablest officer the French have, and a bitter thorn in our side."

"*Ja!*" exclaimed Corlaer with unaccustomed vigor.

"Peter knows," laughed the Mayor. "Eh, Peter?"

Corlaer's reply was indecently explicit in its description of Joncaire.

"Peter once prepared a clever trap for Joncaire," con-

tinued Master Livingston, seeing I did not understand my companion's rage. "He was to be captured whilst he feasted with some friends amongst the Senecas. But Joncaire got wind of it, and instead 'twas Peter who escaped by a lucky slit in a bark-house wall."

Livingston would have persuaded us to stay the night at his house, but we had told Ta-wan-ne-ars we would return to the tavern, so we let him get to his bed and sought our own.

In the morning we visited Captain Schuyler, but he was absent, riding some lands he held in the vicinity. We spent the forenoon in purchasing for me the regular trappings of the frontiersman—moccasins of ankle height and leather leggings and shirt, all Indian in manufacture. The weapons Juggins had supplied me were warmly praised by my comrades.

For the rest there were slim stores of salt, sugar, powder, flints and ball to be packed upon our backs. My garments of civilization I made into a package which I consigned to the innkeeper's care.

Personally I did not care in that moment whether I ever donned them again. I liked my companions. I liked the loose, yielding clothing I had acquired. I liked the feel of arms at my side and in my hands. I liked the sun and wind in my hair, for I refused to wear the fur-cap which the forest-runners affected and went like an Indian, bareheaded. I liked the close grip on the earth which the moccasins gave my feet.

At noon we mustered at the tavern door, ready for our plunge into the wilderness. It meant little to Ta-wan-ne-ars and Corlaer. For them 'twas an old story. But to me it meant everything—how completely everything I did not appreciate at that early day.

The Seneca inspected me with a grave smile as I appeared, fully arrayed for the first time.

"My brother wears Mohawk moccasins," he said. "We

will find Seneca moccasins for him when we reach my country."

"Do I appear as a warrior should?" I inquired anxiously.

"Even to the scalp-lock," he assured me, in reference to my long hair.

"Can you walk t'irty miles a day?" demanded Corlaer seriously.

"I have done so."

"You will do idt efery day now," he remarked grimly.

We took the road to Schenectady. It was the last white man's road I was to see, and I long remembered its broad surface and the sunlight coming down between the trees on either hand and the farms with their log houses and stockades.

But I knew I was on the frontier at last, for the stockades were over-high for the mere herding of cattle and the house-walls were loop-holed. In several of the villages there were square, log-built forts, two stories tall, with the top story projecting out beyond the lower, so that the garrison could fire down along the line of the walls.

'Twas sixteen miles to Schenectady, and night had fallen when we hailed the gate for admission. There was a parley between Corlaer and the watch before we were admitted, but in the end the huge balks of timber creaked open just wide enough for us to squeeze through.

"You are cautious, friend," I said to the gatekeeper as I set my shoulder beside his and helped him shut the gate.

"And you are a stranger, my master," he retorted, "or you would never think it strange for Schenectady folk to use caution."

"How is that?" I asked.

And he told me in few words and simply how Monsieur d'Erville had surprized the town in his father's time and massacred the inhabitants.

"But now you have peace," I objected.

He looked at me suspiciously.

"Are you a friend of Andrew Murray?" he asked.

"Anything but that."

"Then talk not of peace, sir. Peace here will last until the French and their savages are ready to strike. No longer. It may be tonight. It may not be for twenty years—if we see to it that the French do not thrive at our expense."

We were afoot again early the next morning. Beyond Schenectady a few farms rimmed the road, but presently we came to a clearing, and on the west side a green barrier stretched across our way. From end to end of the clearing it reached, and as far on either hand as I could see, a high, tangled, apparently impervious green wall of vegetation. 'Twas the outer rampart of the wilderness.

Some men were working in a field beside the road, and I saw that they had their guns beside them.

"They are armed," I cried.

"So are you," replied Corlaer.

"But——"

"This is der frontier," he said. "Eferybody is armed. Eferybody is on watch."

"Why?"

"Idt is der frontier."

I held my peace, until we reached the forest-wall. Then curiosity mastered me again.

"The road stops here," I said to Ta-wan-ne-ars. "How shall we go on?"

He smiled.

"The road of the white man stops—yes," he answered. "But the road of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee begins."

"What is that?"

He made no answer, but kept on his way until we were under the bole of the first of the forest trees.

"Does my brother Ormerod see anything now?" he asked.

I shook my head, puzzled.

"My brother has much to learn of the forest and its ways," he commented.

He put his hand on my arm and led me around the trunk, Corlaer following with a broad grin on his face.

There at my feet was a deep, narrow slot in the earth, a groove some eighteen inches wide and perhaps twelve inches deep, that disappeared into the gloom which reigned under the interlacing boughs overhead. There was shrubbery and underbrush on every side, but none grew in or on the edge of the slot. It did not go straight, but crookedly like a snake, curving and twisting as it chanced to meet a mossy boulder or a tree too big to be readily felled or uprooted. As I stooped over it I saw that its bottom and steeply sloping sides were hard-packed, beaten down by continual pressure, the relentless pressure of countless human feet for generations and centuries.

"My brother is standing upon the Wa-a-gwen-ne-yuh, the Great Trail of my people." said Ta-wan-ne-ars proudly. "It is the highway of the People of the Long House. Day after day we shall follow it, along the valley of the Mohawks, into the land of the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, on into the valley where the Onondagas keep alight the sacred Council Fire which was kindled by Da-ga-no-weda and Ha-yo-wont-ha, the Founders of the League, and on, still on, my white brother, past the country of the Cayugas to the villages of my own people whom you call the Senecas, and at the last to the Thunder Waters of Jagara, where Joncaire works to conquer the domain of the Long House for the French King."

"But over this same trail, Ta-wan-ne-ars, the warriors of the Long House shall burst upon the French to frustrate that plan!" I exclaimed.

"Aye, so it shall be," he replied.

Corlaer sighed and resettled his pack on his shoulders.

"We hafe much distance to go today," he said.

Ta-wan-ne-ars instantly led the way into the groove of the trail, and as if instinctively swung into an easy loping trot. I followed him and the Dutchman brought up the rear.

It was cool under the trees, for the sun seldom penetrated the foliage, dense already although it was only the fag-end of Spring. And it was very silent—terribly, oppressively silent. The crack of a stick underfoot was like a musket-shot. The padding of our feet on the resilient leaf-mold was like the low rolling of muffled drums. The timorous twittering of birds seemed to set the echoes flying.

Yet I was amazed when Ta-wan-ne-ars halted abruptly in mid-afternoon, and inclined his ear toward the trail behind us.

"What is it?" I asked, and so completely had the spirit of the forest taken possession of me that I whispered the words.

"Something is following us," he answered.

Corlaer put his ear to the bottom of the trail, and a curious expression crossed his face.

"*Ya*," was all he said.

XIII

THE TRAILERS

"SHALL we return and face them?" I asked eagerly. Ta-wan-ne-ars permitted himself a smile of friendly sarcasm.

"If we can hear them, surely they can hear us," he said. "No, we will keep on. There is a place farther along the trail from which we can look back upon them. Come, Ormerod, you and I will run ahead. Peter will follow us."

"But why does he not come with us?" I objected. "If there is danger——"

"If there is danger we will all front it together," interrupted Ta-wan-ne-ars. "Peter is to walk behind us so that the trailers may not detect our haste."

"Ja," assented Peter.

Ta-wan-ne-ars shifted his musket to his shoulders, and broke into a long, loping stride. I followed him.

Half a mile up the trail we came to a clearing where some storm of bygone years had battered down a belt of sturdy timber. We ran for another half-mile beyond this before Ta-wan-ne-ars slowed his pace and commenced to study the leaf barriers that walled the slot of the trail. Presently he stopped.

"Walk in my tracks, brother," he said. "And be certain that you do not bruise a twig."

With the utmost caution he parted the screen of underbrush on our right hand, and revealed a tunnel through the greenery into which he led the way, hesitating at each step until he had gently thrust aside the intervening foliage.

Once in the tunnel, however, his care was abandoned, and he ran quickly to the trunk of a huge pine which soared upward like a monumental column, high above the surrounding trees. He leaned his musket against the pitchy bole.

"The symbol of the Long House," he said tapping the swelling girth of it. "Strength and symmetry and grandeur. We will climb, brother."

He swung himself up into the branches, which formed a perfect ladder, firm under foot, behind the screen of the pine-needles. When the other tree-tops were beneath us, he straddled a bough and cleared a loop-hole from which we might look out over the forest we had traversed.

"How did you know this tree was here?" I questioned curiously.

"Upon occasion enemies penetrate the Long House, so we must be able to see who follow us."

"Do you know that those who follow us are enemies?"

He shook his head.

"If they were friends 'twas strange they did not try to overtake us, brother. My people like company when they travel."

He said no more, but fixed his eyes on the forest below. It swept away in billows of green that rolled in gigantic combers across ridge and hillock and tossed plumes of spray aloft whenever a breeze rustled the tree-tops. There was an effect of continuity, of boundless size such as the ocean gives. From my lofty perch I could survey the four quarters of the horizon, and in every direction the forest stretched to the sky-line. The Great Trail of the Iroquois was hidden from sight. The one gap in the vista of emerald and jade was the narrow slash of the clearing we had recently crossed.

I saw that Ta-wan-ne-ars had concentrated his attention upon this spot, where the exit of the trail was indicated by a ragged fringe of undergrowth. We looked for so long, without anything happening that my eyeballs ached. But

at last there was a movement like the miniature upheaval which is caused by an ant in breaking ground. Boughs quivered, and a figure appeared in the open. 'Twas Corlaer. He glanced around him and strode on. In a moment he had passed the clearing and disappeared in the forest.

Ta-wan-ne-ars hitched forward and peered through the loop-hole with tense muscles. And again there was a wait which seemed endless. My eyelids blinked from the strain of watching.

The desolation and loneliness of the wilderness were so complete that it seemed inconceivable another human being could be within view. And whilst this thought occupied my mind a dark figure crawled on hands and knees from the mouth of the trail.

The newcomer feared a trap. His ear sought the ground. His eye studied the sky above him. He looked in every direction. But his instincts were baffled. He stole forward across the clearing with musket poised. At that distance all we could see of his costume was the clump of feathers that bristled from his scalp-lock.

He followed Peter into the trail on our side of the clearing, and there was a second and briefer pause. Then as silently as ghosts a string of figures flitted into the clearing. There were six of them, each with musket in the hollow of his arm, each with bristling feather headdress. They walked one behind the other, with a peculiar effect, even at that distance, of stealth and watchfulness.

Ta-wan-ne-ars emitted a guttural grunt, quite unlike his usual rather musical utterances.

"Cahnuagas!" he exclaimed, and spat.

"What?" I answered.

"Down!" he rasped. "Down! The time is scant!"

All the way during our descent he was muttering to himself in his own tongue, and a black scowl covered his face. At the foot of the pine he snatched up his musket without a word, and turned into the green tunnel that debouched upon the screen of the trail.

As we stepped into the worn slot Peter came into view.

"Well?" he said phlegmatically.

"Cahnauagas," answered Ta-wan-ne-ars.

The Seneca's face became convulsed with fury.

"Cahnuaga dogs! They dare to invade territory of the Long House!"

"We can cross der Mohawk to der south branch of der trail," proposed Corlaer. "They wouldt not dare to follow us there."

"No," snarled Ta-wan-ne-ars; " we shall not step aside for them. We will attend to them ourselves."

"Hafe you a plan?" inquired the Dutchman amicably. He never lost his temper when other people did.

"Yes," said the Seneca briefly. "And now we will go along as if we did not know they were near us."

"Are they not likely to attack?" I interposed.

"No, they will not attack unless they have to for we are still near the Mohawk Castle, although 'tis upon the opposite bank of the river. They will leave us alone until night."

"But why can not we attack them?"

A look of ferocity which was almost demoniac changed his usually pleasant features into an awful mask.

"In an ambuscade one might escape. No, my brother Ormerod, we will wait until they attack us. Then——"

He paused significantly.

"Not one of the Keepers shall return to tell Murray how his brothers died."

We took up the march. 'Twas already mid-afternoon, and shortly the dimness of twilight descended upon the trail, as the level rays of the setting sun were turned aside by the interlacing masses of vegetation.

Once, I remember, we passed along the edge of a swampy tract, and I saw for the first time that industrious animal, the beaver, whose pelt was the principal stake for which France and England contended in the great game upon the issue of which depended the future of a continent. They

had erected a dam across one end of a stream to make a pond, and their engineers were busily at work floating trees into place to reënforce a weak point in the structure. Other trees a few feet from the trail were gnawed in preparation for felling.

"How is it they are able to exist here so close to the white man's country?" I called to Ta-wan-ne-ars.

He flung a haughty look cross his shoulder. Since we had identified the Cahnuagas a startling change had transformed him. The veneer of deferential courtesy which ordinarily he wore was cracked. He was all Indian. More than that, he was contemptuous of what was not Indian. Aye, of whatever was not Iroquois like himself, of the bone and sinew of the League.

"This is not the white man's country," he answered. "You are within the portals of the Long House."

"But the beaver's skin is no less valuable to the Indian than to the white man," I persisted.

"Yes," he agreed, "yet the Indian does not slay game only for gain. If it were not for the dam those beavers built the Great Trail we walk upon would be overflowed. So long ago in the time of my forefathers that tradition can not fix the date the forefathers of those beavers built that dam, and when the Founders drove the trail they decreed that the beavers should be safe forever—that the trail might be safe."

Twilight faded into dusk and still we kept on. Ta-wan-ne-ars had eyes like a cat's, and I, too, accustomed myself to perception of hanging branches and the unexpected turns and twists in the groove of the path. The stars were out in the sky overhead when we stepped from the shelter of the forest into a rocky dell divided by a tiny brook.

"We will camp here," said Ta-wan-ne-ars.

He rested his musket on a boulder and began to collect firewood.

"Why a fire?" I asked.

"The trailers must not think we suspect them," he replied curtly. "If we lit no fire they would know for certain that we were suspicious."

I helped him, whilst Corlaer crouched by the opening of the trail on watch. We soon had a respectable pile of wood, but before kindling it the Seneca bade us strip off our leathern shirts and stuffed them with underbrush into a semblance of human shapes. A third figure to represent himself he contrived out of the packs and several branches.

The three dummies were then disposed to the satisfaction of Ta-wan-ne-ars and, striking flint and steel to some rotten wood, a bright blaze sent the shadows chasing each other around the confines of the glade.

"Peter," he said, "you had best take post by that boulder on the other side of the fire, Ormerod and Ta-wan-ne-ars will lie together upon this side."

"You need not think it necessary to keep me by your side," I said indignantly. " 'Tis not the first time I shall have heard musketry."

A gleam of humorous intelligence chased the gloomy ferocity from the Seneca's face.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars does not doubt the valor of his brother," he said, "but Ormerod has never fought with Cahnuagas. They are dogs, but they are skilled in forest war."

He did not give me a chance to answer, but putting his fingers to his lips to enjoin silence sank down behind a boulder next to the one by which I stood. Corlaer had been swallowed by the dancing shadows beyond the fire.

I dropped beside Ta-wan-ne-ars, and like him dusted fresh powder into the pan of my musket, drew tomahawk and knife from their sheaths and laid them on the ground within reach.

How long we waited I can not say, but the suspense which had racked me in the swaying branches of the pine that afternoon was nothing compared to the agony of the hours that followed. For it must have been at least two hours after we had taken cover that Ta-wan-ne-ars touched

my arm, and the light from the glowing bed of coals revealed a feathered head crouching forward where the trail entered the glade.

It hovered around the edge of the firelight like a monstrous reptilian fiend, body bent nearly double, a glint of steel showing whenever the hands moved. Presently he withdrew into the trail, and it seemed that two more hours dragged by on leaden feet, althought it was probably less than half that time.

The fire was lower, but Ta-wan-ne-ars did not need to warn me when the Keepers reappeared. It was as if a mist of evil preceded them. My senses were alert, and I saw the first feathered head emerge from the trail and each one of the six who followed their leader. I counted every step of their approach until the yellow paint which streaked the ribs of the one nearest to me glimmered in the light of the embers.

"Hah-yah-yah-eeee-eee-ee-e!"

Ta-wan-ne-ars sounded the war-whoop as he fired, and instinctively I aimed my piece at those ocher-tinted ribs and pressed the trigger. The report of my musket carried on the echoes which had been roused by the Seneca's. Corlaer's discharged as I bounded to my feet.

The Cahnuagas yelled in surprize; three of them were thrashing out their lives on the rocks. But the four survivors did not hesitate. The French called them "Praying Indians," and perhaps they did pray occasionally for Black Robe, to placate him sufficiently in order that they might practise their own horrid rites in secret. They fought now like the devils they really were.

One of them was on me immediately, bounding over the boulders with screeches that split the night. His knife and hatchet cut circles around my head—then chopped at my bowels. His activity was extraordinary, and he fought better than I, for he knew his weapons and they were strange to me.

It was the realization of this which saved me. Fending

awkwardly with knife or hatchet against a foe whose handling of them was the result of lifelong training, I was at a disadvantage. I could not hope to beat him by his own methods.

So I changed the tomahawk to my left hand, and grasped the knife by the hilt as if it were a sword, thrusting with it point first instead of slashing as the Indian did. And now my skill at fence was in my favor.

The Cahnuaga's knife was no longer than mine. We were on equal terms—or rather the advantage inclined toward me. Bewilderment showed in the Indian's face. He did not understand this fighting with passes and parries and swift, stabbing assaults. I touched him in the thigh, and he struck at my knife-arm with his hatchet; but my tomahawk was ready to meet him.

He side-stepped to attack me from a new quarter, but I pivoted on my heel as I had often done in the *salle des armes,* and he retreated, circling warily in search of an opportunity to return to the style of fighting he preferred. My chance came the next time he charged me, goaded into desperation by these strange tactics. I aimed a smashing blow at his head with the tomahawk, and, as he lifted his own hatchet to guard, I thrust for his belly, parried his knife and ripped him open.

His death-yell was in my ears as I leaped over his body and looked to see how my comrades were doing. Ta-wan-ne-ars had just knifed his man and was running to the help of Peter, who had two assailants on his hands. As Ta-wan-ne-ars came up, the Dutchman closed with one, dashed the defending weapons aside and grasped the struggling savage in his powerful arms. The last Cahnuaga turned to flee, but Ta-wan-ne-ars did not even attempt to pursue him. Without any appearance of haste the Seneca balanced his tomahawk, drew back his arm and hurled it after the fugitive. The keen blade crushed the man's skull before he had passed from the circle of firelight, and Ta-wan-ne-ars sauntered across and scalped him.

"That time Ta-wan-ne-ars did not miss, brother," he observed to me as I watched with fascinated horror the bloody neatness with which he dispatched his task.

"But why do you scalp your enemies, Ta-wan-ne-ars?" I answered. "Surely——"

"I am an Indian, not a white man."

"Yet you——"

"I have forgotten what the missionaries taught me," he replied impatiently. "All except what I think may be useful to my people."

Peter brought up his captive and tossed the man down in front of us.

"Oof, that was a goodt fight!" he commented placidly.

"Why a prisoner, Peter?" asked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"We will ask him of der Doom Trail," returned Corlaer.

He jerked the man to his feet.

"Where is der Doom Trail?" he demanded.

The Cahnuaga, badly shaken though he was, drew himself erect and folded his arms across his painted chest.

"The Rat can go to the torture-stake and not answer that question, Corlaer," he said quite simply.

"We will take you to the nearest village and let you make good your boast," threatened Ta-wan-ne-ars.

The Cahnuaga smiled.

"If I told you, none the less should I suffer at the stake," he said, "for the Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta[1] knows all. Do your worst, Chief of the Long House."

A tinge of mockery colored his voice.

"Be sure that whatever you do you can not equal the ingenuity of the Ga-go-sa. Yes, I think you will come to know more about them some day, Iroquois. I seem to see pictures in the firelight of a stake, and a building with a tower and a bell that rings, and many of the Ga-go-sa dance around you, and your pain is very great. Aye, you are shrieking like a woman; you——"

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[1] Mistress of the False Faces.

He sprang, not at the Seneca but at me. His hands were around my throat before I could move. His eyes blazed into mine. His teeth gnashed at my face. A gout of blood, thick and warm, deluged me. The next thing I remembered was seeing Ta-wan-ne-ars bending over me.

"My brother is whole?" he asked anxiously.

The ferocity was gone from his face, and his fingers prodded me tenderly in search of hurts.

"Yes," I said, sitting up and rubbing a very sore throat. "except that I shall not be able to swallow for a time."

"You were choked, brother."

"And the Cahnuaga?"

"That dog is dead. Do you sleep now, for the dawn grows near and we must be upon our way."

XIV

ALONG THE GREAT TRAIL

I STIRRED to wakefulness when the first pink light of morning was in the eastern skies. A pungent whiff of wood-smoke filled my nostrils, and I turned over to watch Corlaer frying bacon and maize cakes—only to lose my appetite at the spectacle of Ta-wan-ne-ars stretching scalps on little hoops of withes to dry by the fire.

He went about it in a very business-like way, yet he indulged in an amiable grin over my look of interested aversion.

"What does my brother find that is so horrible in a scalp?" he inquired, extending a particularly gory one for my inspection. " 'Tis no more than the crown of a man's head—and that man an enemy."

"I like not the idea of mutilating a body," I retorted. "If you have slain a man, 'tis sufficient. Why, you might as well cut off his arm or his head!"

He considered my point while he made another hoop and adjusted a scalp to it.

"Yes," he agreed; "that is what the English do, I am told."

"What?" I protested indignantly. " 'Tis absurd!"

"To be sure, Ta-wan-ne-ars knows no more than what the missionaries and his other white friends have told him," he answered. "But they say that when a man in England is condemned to die, if he is an enemy of the King, his head is chopped off and put on a high place, and sometimes his arms and his legs are hacked off, too, and shown elsewhere."

For an instant I was nonplussed.

"That may be so," I said finally, "but in battle we do not cut off the heads or limbs of our foes."

"It is not your custom to do so," rejoined the Seneca equably. "It is the custom of my people to scalp their foes. Then when a warrior returns to his village and recounts his exploits nobody can deny his proof."

I was at a loss to reply, and Corlaer averted further argument by announcing that the bacon and maize were cooked. But I was somewhat amused to notice that Ta-wan-ne-ars was careful to wash his hands before eating. So much, at least, the missionaries had dented the armor of his innate barbarism.

"And what of these?" I asked, pointing to the distorted bodies of Murray's emissaries, as we adjusted our packs for the day's march.

Corlaer raised his cupped hand to his ear.

"Do you hear?" he said.

I followed his example, and through the clashing of the branches overhead there sounded a prolonged, exultant howling.

"Der wolfs," he explained.

There was no disputing his stolid acceptance of the situation, and I fell into my place between the Dutchman and Ta-wan-ne-ars. In five minutes the forest had closed around us. The glade of last night's adventure was shut off as completely as if it existed in another world. There remained no more than the bare groove of the trail and the encompassing walls of underbrush and overhead the roof of tree-boughs. But at intervals a faint echo of yelps and snarls was borne to our ears by the forest breeze.

That afternoon we forded the Mohawk to the southern side some distance above Ga-ne-ga-ha-ga,[1] the Upper Mohawk Castle. And now for the first time we began to meet other travelers. Several Mohawk families shifting their abodes on account of poor crop conditions in their old

[1] Near Danube, N. Y.

villages; a party of Oneidas of the Turtle Clan journeying on a visit of condolence to the Mohawk Turtles, one of whose *roy-an-ehs* had just died; a band of Mohawk hunters returning from the Spring hunt. By these latter Ta-wan-ne-ars sent word to So-a-wa-ah, the senior *roy-an-eh* of the Mohawk Wolf Clan, charged with the warding of the Eastern Door, of our encounter with the Cahnuagas and its result.

We continued up the valley of the Mohawk all of that day and the next. As we advanced westward the country became less settled. Game was more plentiful. Once a deer trotted into the trail and stared at us before plunging on its way. The second day, as we made camp and I set out to gather firewood, a pile of sticks which I approached moved with a dry, whirring rattle, and a mottled flat head rose menacingly from restless coils.

"Be careful, brother," shouted Ta-wan-ne-ars.

I jumped back in bewilderment.

"What is it?" I gasped.

"Death," he said grimly. " 'Tis the Snake Which Rattles, and its bite is fatal. Yet it is an honorable foe, for it always gives warning before it strikes. So let us permit it to depart in peace."

The evening of the third day we camped in the Oneida country at the base of a hill, which the trail encircles and which for that reason was called Nun-da-da-sis.[1] Here we had a stroke of what turned out afterward to be rare good luck. Whilst we were making camp a group of five canoes of the birch-bark which is used by other nations than the Iroquois[2] approached from up-stream, and their occupants camped beside us.

These Indians were Messesagues, whose country lay between the two great inland seas, the Erie and Huron

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[1] "Around the Hill;" present site of Utica, N. Y.

[2] There were very few birches in Iroquois territory. They employed instead red elm and hickory bark, which were much heavier.

Lakes. They were on their way to Fort Orange or Albany to trade their Winter catch of furs, which lay baled in the canoes. Ta-wan-ne-ars, as Warden of the Western Door, had held intercourse with these people before and understood their language.

They told him that they had had trouble with the Sieur de Tonty, commander of the French trading-post of Le De Troit,[1] which had been established in their country; and that in consequence de Tonty had been obliged to flee and they had decided to shift their trade to the English.[2] Ta-wan-ne-ars encouraged them in this design and described to them the high quality and quantity of the goods they might expect to get in exchange for their furs at Albany.

On the fourth day the trail abandoned the head-waters of the Mohawk, fast shallowing in depth, and headed westward across the mile-wide divide of land which separates the waters flowing into the Mohawk and Hudson's River from those flowing into Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River of Canada. This passage or carrying-place between the waters was called Da-ya-hoo-wa-quat,[3] and we met several parties of Indians carrying their canoes and packs from one stream to the other.

I had my first view of the long houses of the Iroquois at the Oneida Castle, Ga-no-a-lo-hale,[4] which was situated on the Oneida Lake. They were impressive buildings, sixty, eighty, one hundred and sometimes one hundred and twenty feet in length and from twelve to fifteen or twenty feet wide. We went as a matter of course to the lodgings of the Oneida Wolves, of whom Ta-wan-ne-ars, according to the Iroquois code, was a blood-brother; and they placed at our disposition a guest-chamber, the first next to the entrance of the Ga-no-sote,[5] together with all the firewood

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[1] Detroit, Mich.

[2] De Tonty was obliged to abandon his post temporarily about this time.

[3] "Place for Carrying Boats;" present site of Rome, N. Y.

[4] "A head on a pole."

[5] Bark house.

and food which we required and an aged squaw to cook and wait upon us.

Our chamber was perhaps twelve or fourteen feet in length and twelve feet across. On each side there was a shelf or bunk of bark placed on wooden sticks, raised about two feet from the beaten-clay floor and covered with skins, more or less infested with vermin.[1] Above these bunks again were other shelves for holding clothing, weapons or provisions. The passageway between the bunks was the common entry to the house.

In the middle was a fire-hole where our squaw cooked. In the remainder of the length of the house there was a fire for every four families, and when all were cooking at once—as was frequently the case—the smoke that escaped through the vents in the roof was negligible.

On the other hand, the houses were stanchly constructed and weather-proof, and they demonstrated strikingly the clannishness and community spirit which were the outstanding characteristics of the Iroquois. They thought, not as families or individuals, as most savage or barbarous people do, but as a people, as a clan, a tribe or a confederacy.

In this, as Ta-wan-ne-ars remarked in our many talks on this and kindred subjects, lay the secret of their political and military success. It enabled them to concentrate, when they wished, an overwhelming force against any other tribes, and a force which could be directed in the joint interests of the League. Only the French or English could withstand them, and their aid must tip the balance in favor of the white nation whose cause they espoused.

From the Oneida Castle the Great Trail bore westward past De-o-sa-da-ya-ah,[2] which lay on the boundaries of the Onondagas, whose beautiful valley, with its mirror lake, was the fairest country I have ever seen unless it be the matchless home of the Senecas. The trail led us through the

[1] I am obliged to confess I had lice throughout my stay amongst the Indians. 'Twas impossible to be clean.—H. O.

[2] Deep Spring.

three villages of the tribe, which were scattered along the banks of the Onondaga River northward of the lake.

At Ka-na-ta-go-wa burned the sacred Council-Fire of the Long House which their traditions claimed had been lighted by the godlike Founders of the League, the two *roy-an-ehs,* Da-ga-no-weda and Ha-yo-wont-ha, whose places in the Ho-yar-na-go-war [1] have never been filled because the Great Spirit can not create again men worthy to hold their titles.

Ordinarily, Ta-wan-ne-ars would have halted on his way to pay due reverence to the shrine and to To-do-da-ho, the senior of all the fifty *roy-an-ehs* of the League, whose wisdom and prestige are inherited from the first of the name, him who made practical by his deeds the conceptions of the Founders. But we were in haste; Ta-wan-ne-ars was anxious that no news of our journey should escape; and he pressed on, sending word by a brother Wolf to To-do-da-ho of the circumstances which governed his action.

It was a rich country which we traversed, a country fit to be the home of a race of warriors. The forest always was king, but the ingenuity of the inhabitants forced it back whenever they had need.

In clearings by the streams were vast gardens of corn, pumpkins, melons, squashes and beans. In open spaces were luxuriant orchards of fruit-trees. The people we met, in the villages where we sometimes slept and ate or along the shaded slot of the trail, were pleasant and courteous. They eyed me curiously, but there was never any unseemly disregard of manners. Even the children were polite and hospitable.

"*Qua,*" would be our greeting. "You have traveled far, brother of the Wolf Clan, you and your white friends. Sit by our fire and partake of our food and tobacco, and perhaps when you are rested you will tell us what you have seen on your way."

"What do you think of my people, Ormerod?" asked

[1] Literally, Counselors of the People—the ruling body of the League.

Ta-wan-ne-ars one day as we sat on a hillside above the north end of the Cayuga Lake and looked down on the village of Ga-ya-ga-an-ha.[1]

"I think they are a people of warriors and what we call nobles," I answered.

"That means gentlemen," he said.

"Yes, if you choose," I agreed.

"But they take scalps and have vermin in their clothes," he suggested.

"And they are kind to the stranger and fearless and generous," I returned.

Corlaer, who usually said nothing, took his pipe from his mouth and blinked at me.

"*Ja,*" he said. "Andt there is der same kind of fermin in Fort Orange or New York."

We slept that night in the Cayuga village, and in the morning forded the foot of the lake and pursued the trail westward again until it emerged upon the north bank of the Seneca River, which we followed to the village of Ga-nun-da-gwa [2] on the lake of that name.

"Now we are in the country of the Senecas, brother," said Ta-wan-ne-ars, when we started the next morning. "You have seen the homes of all the other tribes, save only the Tuscaroras, who live to the south of the Oneidas; but none of them is so fair as the valley of Gen-nis-he-yo,[3] where my brethren dwell."

And I endorsed his words without reserve on the evening of our tenth day on the Great Trail, when we stood on the brink of the sweetest vale in all the world—aye, more beautiful even than the sacred valley of Onondaga—and looked across the tree-tops at the river that wound along its center like a looping flood of silver, with the myriad colors of the sunset tinting the hills beyond and a soft wind waft-

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[1] Near present site of Auburn, N. Y.
[2] Site of Canandaigua, N. Y.
[3] Literally, "The Beautiful Valley."

ing upward to our level the odors of the woodlands and orchards.

From a little village that was huddled on the near bank of the river Ta-wan-ne-ars sent off that night a messenger to carry on word of our coming. So two days later, when we had passed the Gen-nis-he-yo and the belt of forest beyond to the Senecas' chief town, De-o-nun-da-ga-a, it was to find ourselves expected guests. Warriors and hunters, women and children, along the trail, hailed Ta-wan-ne-ars and his friends; and at the gates of the palisade which fortified the village—for it was the principal stronghold of the Western Door—stood Do-ne-ho-ga-weh himself, the Guardian of the Door, with his *roy-an-ehs* and *ha-seh-no-wa-weh*,[1] or chiefs, around him.

He was a splendid-looking old man, tall as Ta-wan-ne-ars, his massive shoulders unbent by age, his naked chest, with the vivid device of the wolf's head, rounded like a barrel; his pendant scalp-lock shot with gray. He and those with him were in gala dress, and the sun sparkled on elaborate beadwork and silver and gold ornaments and inlay of weapons.

He took one step forward as we halted, and his right arm went up in the graceful Iroquois salute.

"*Qua*, Ta-wan-ne-ars!" his voice boomed out. "You are welcome home, O my nephew. I can see that you have been brave against our enemies, for you carry a string of scalps at your belt. I can see that you have been honored, for Corlaer walks with you. I can see that you have been fortunate, for a strange white man walks beside you who has friendship in his face.

"Enter, O my nephew, with your white friends. The Council-House is made ready for them, and you will dwell with them a while until their feet have become accustomed to the new paths and their eyes see straight the unfamiliar

[1] Literally, "An Elevated Name." The office of chief was elective and in no sense hereditary or noble as was that of *roy-an-eh*, which has been misnamed sachem.

things about them. We are eager to hear of your experiences and the deeds you have done. Enter!"

He turned on his heel and walked before us, and those who had accompanied him fell into single file behind us. So we paraded through the village—or rather I should say town, for it contained many thousand people—until we reached a house in the center where burned the tribal Council-Fire and where ambassadors and distinguished guests were lodged.

This house was oblong, almost square. The *roy-an-ehs,* chiefs and elders filed into it at our heels and arranged themselves around the fire in the center. Then squaws fetched in clay dishes of meats and vegetables of several kinds, as well as fruit, which they set down at intervals around the circle, and at a signal from Do-ne-ho-ga-weh everybody began to eat, each one dipping his finegrs into whichever dish was nearest or most to his liking, but all governed by the utmost deference toward the wishes of their neighbors.

At the conclusion of the meal Do-ne-ho-ga-weh lighted a ceremonial pipe, carved of soapstone, with a long wooden mouthpiece decorated with beads and small, bright-colored feathers. He blew one puff toward the ground, one puff toward the sky and one toward each of the four quarters. Then he passed it to Ta-wan-ne-ars on his right hand, and Ta-wan-ne-ars gravely puffed it for a moment, and handed it to me. I did likewise, and gave it to Corlaer, who handed it on to the next man, and so it went the rounds of the fire.

There was a moment's silence, and then Ta-wan-ne-ars began the account of his travels, speaking slowly and without oratorical effect. Afterward he told me what he and the others had said. He made no references to our mission, but he described his journey to New York, his interview with Ga-en-gwa-ra-go—this impressed his audience mightily, and they applauded by a succession of gutteral grunts—his meeting with me; the arrival of Murray and de Veulle and

its meaning; our journey homeward and the fight with the Cahnuagas.

"*Na-ho!*" he concluded.

Again there was a pause. Then Do-ne-ho-ga-weh rose.

"We thank you, O my nephew," he said. "You have indeed honored us and yourself, and your white friends have shown themselves to be brave men. Now we will retire so that you may rest."

He walked out, and the others followed.

"What next?" I asked as Ta-wan-ne-ars filled his pipe.

The Seneca smiled.

"Soon we shall have a real talk," he said, and reached for a live coal.

"A real talk?" I repeated.

"Do-ne-ho-ga-weh knows that we could not tell him all of our tale when so many ears were listening. He knows, too, that we are pressed for time."

"*Ja,*" squeaked Corlaer, "der *roy-an-eh* will come back."

An hour passed, and I began to doubt my friends' wisdom. I was sleepy and tired. I had had overmuch of the coarse native-grown tobacco. But in the event I was rewarded, for a shadow darkened the entrance and the Guardian of the Western Door stood before us.

He sat between Ta-wan-ne-ars and me, and crammed tobacco into his pipe-bowl.

"You are not sleeping, O my nephew," he commented.

"We have that upon our minds which will not let us sleep," answered Ta-wan-ne-ars.[1]

"Would it ease the weight on your minds to confide your troubles in me?"

"That is my thought, O my uncle."

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh bowed gravely to all of us.

"My ears are open," he said.

There was a pause, and Ta-wan-ne-ars put down his pipe upon the floor.

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[1] This conversation was translated for me later by Ta-wan-ne-ars.—H. O.

"As you know, O my uncle," he began, "I went with Corlaer to Ga-en-gwa-ra-go to tell him of Joncaire's plans to build a stone fort at Jagara. On the same day came this white warrior, Ormerod, whom I call my brother, with word that Murray had defeated Ga-en-gwa-ra-go before Go-weh-go-wa. On the same day came the Frenchman de Veulle, who once lived for a while amongst us. Him you will remember."

The bronze mask of the *roy-an-eh's* face was contorted for one brief instant by a flare of passion.

"I remember him," he said simply.

"De Veulle comes from Onontio's King with a message for the Canadian tribes, O my uncle. He and Murray and Joncaire work together to defeat our friend Ga-en-gwa-ra-go and drive the English from the land. Ga-en-gwa-ra-go has sent my brother Ormerod, who has lived amongst the French and speaks their tongue, to spy out the ground at Jagara. I go with him. After that, if we may, we shall seek the Doom Trail and clean out the Cahnuaga dogs."

For five minutes Do-ne-ho-ga-weh smoked in silence. Then he emptied his pipe.

"I am glad that Ga-en-gwa-ra-go keeps his eyes open, O my nephew," he said. "But I can not understand why the English disagree amongst themselves, so that one faction work for Onontio. However, they are white people, and I am a red man. Perhaps that is the reason. Do you wish my counsel?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars inclined his head.

"The Messesagues you met on the Mohawk told you that de Tonty was in trouble. I do not think word of this can yet have reached Joncaire. My advice is that you dress yourself as a Messesague warrior, O my nephew, and that your white brother—whose name I can not coil my tongue around—call himself by a French name. Then the two of you may go to Joncaire and say that you have just come from Le de Troit and give him the news and he will make you welcome. So you may spy out his plans at Jagara."

"*Ja,*" assented Corlaer in English; "that is a goodt plan. You needt a goodt plan for a fox like Joncaire. By ——, I hope you fool him andt bring home his scalp."

"The news which Ga-en-gwa-ra-go asks for will be sufficient," replied Ta-wan-ne-ars. "O my uncle, we thank you. Now we may sleep with ease."

"That is well," said the *roy-an-eh,* rising.

He lifted his arm in salute.

"May Ha-wen-ne-yu, the Great Spirit, and the Ho-no-che-no-keh, his Invisible Aids, have you in their keeping."

XV

JONCAIRE IS HOSPITABLE

IT WAS a week before we left De-o-nun-da-ga-a, and although the delay irked me it could not be avoided, for the prolonged absence of Ta-wan-ne-ars from his post as Warden of the Western Door of the Long House had permitted an accumulation of questions of political and military importance which required his attention. He spent the days either in consultations with the *roy-an-ehs* and chiefs and delegations from neighboring tribes or in inspecting the marches. Corlaer departed with a small band of braves upon a hunting-trip, but I availed myself of the opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of the remarkable military confederacy which held the balance of power in America.

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, as Guardian of the Western Door, was the political custodian of the most important frontier of the League. As such he was supreme.

But Ta-wan-ne-ars with his assistant chief, So-no-so-wa,[1] of the Turtle Clan, were the military captains of the Western Door. They were the only permanent war-chiefs in the confederacy, all others being elected to temporary command in times of emergency. They were also assistants to Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and attended him in this capacity at meetings of the Ho-yar-na-go-war, the great council of the *roy-an-ehs.* Their duty was to keep in proper subjection the numerous tributary nations, beyond the actual bound-

[1] "Great Oyster Shell." The names of the two permanent war-chiefs were really titles of honor, and were hereditary in an indirect line like the rank of *roy-an-eh,* the idea being to select the ablest man of his generation in a particular family.

aries of the Long House, and equally to safeguard the Western Door from attack by any enemy.

So-no-so-wa at the time of my visit was absent on a trip to the south to chastise a band of Shawanese who had presumed to invade the hunting-grounds of the League. So jealous was the watch kept over the supremacy of the Long House that the slightest aggression or impertinence, even against a tributary nation, was punished at the earliest opportunity.

One of Ta-wan-ne-ars' first acts was to organize a war-party to harry the Miamis in retaliation for an attack upon a village of the Andastes in the Susquehanna Valley who were subject to the jurisdiction of the League.

"It was the intent of the Founders to prevent quarrels amongst the five nations who formed the Ho-de-no-sau-nee," explained Ta-wan-ne-ars as we sat in the Council-House after the departure of an embassy from the Jego-sa-sa[1] or so-called Neuter Nation, who had petitioned for relief from the military aid which had been demanded of them for the expedition against the Miamis. "Before we built the Long House we fought constantly amongst ourselves. Afterwards we fought only against others, and because we were united we always won, although sometimes our wars lasted for many years.

"And now that we are strong, and only the white man can venture to oppose our war-parties, we fight for nothing more than the right to impose peace upon others. If a nation makes trouble for us too frequently we subjugate it, as we did the Delawares. If a nation is troublesome upon occasion, like the Je-go-sa-sa, we make it a tributary, and in return we protect it. If a nation is in difficulties, as were the Tuscaroras in the South, and they appeal to us for aid, we give it. We took the Tuscaroras into the League because that was the best way we could protect them."

"Against whom?" I asked innocently.

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[1] Wildcats.

"Against the white men," he answered. "Aye, brother, down in the Southern colonies the white men hunger for land just as they do here in New York. When an Indian tribe is weak, as were the Tuscaroras, the white men drive it before them. When a tribe is strong, like the O-ya-da-ga-o-no[1] or ourselves, it can resist—for a time."

He fell silent and his eyes gazed moodily into the smoke of the Council-Fire.

"Why do you say 'for a time'?" I asked.

"Because I mean it," he retorted fiercely. "Think you Ta-wan-ne-ars is ignorant because he is an Indian? But I do my brother an injustice there, for he does not look down upon the Indian as do so many white men.

"No, Ormerod, I tell you it is so. Today the Indian is still strong. He has the protection of the forest. The white man foolishly has given him guns to fight with, and steel axes and knives. But the Indian grows weaker; the white man grows stronger. In the end the Indian must go."

"The People of the Long House?" I cried. "'Tis impossible after the friendship you have shown us."

He eyed me gloomily.

"Friendship counts at the moment; strength counts in the future," he said. "That is the white man's way. Have I not lived amongst them?"

He leaned forward until his face was close to mine.

"When all else fails the white man will use fire-water, what you call rum and the French call brandy. The red man can not resist it—and it ruins him. He becomes a red animal."

"But——"

He would not let me speak.

"And your missionaries told me I must believe in their God!" he went on scornfully. "A God who permits white men to do things the God of the Indians forbids! I said to them:

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[1] Cherokees.

" 'No. I am an Indian. A good Indian is better than a good white man; he is a better Christian, as you call it. And between bad Indians and bad white men there is only a difference in kinds of evil.' "

A warrior entered to report on a mission to a near-by village, and our conversation lapsed. I was to remember it many times in the future and especially during the adventures which were immediately before me.

The next day we started upon the march to Jagara. We had not gone very far on the morning of the second day of our journey when I began to hear what sounded like a muffled roar, not thunder, but the bellowings of some gigantic monster, whose breath could ruffle the trees of the forest. Ta-wan-ne-ars, who had regained his customary good spirits with the prospect of danger and hardship, smiled at my obvious bewilderment.

" 'Tis the voice of the Great Falls, brother," he said. "The Thunder Waters."

"Does water make that noise?" I exclaimed.

"Nothing but water."

" 'Tis impossible."

"So many have said; and, indeed, the missionaries told me 'twas one of the greatest wonders of the world."

In the early afternoon a mist appeared, overhanging the treetops on the horizon and shot with gorgeous rainbows. The volume of noise increased. It was not deafening. You could speak and converse with ease as you approached it; but it dominated you, made you conscious of a power beyond human effort to subdue.

Yet even so, when we stepped from the trees and the panorama of the cataract lay spread before us, a vast, seething wall of water that swirled and smoked and tossed and fumed in an endless fight for freedom, I was amazed, staggered by the magnitude of the spectacle. Here in the heart of the wilderness, far from civilization, the effect of it was belittling, overwhelming. That mighty flow of water, so resistless, so inevitable in its progress, so unthink-

ably gigantic, seemed almost as if it might sweep away the fabric of a continent.

I stumbled behind Ta-wan-ne-ars into the trail of the portage which led around the falls. Canoes and goods were transported by this route from the Cadarakui Lake to the Lake of the Eries whence poured this endless stream; it was a main-traveled road between the French posts in Canada and their outflung establishments in the farther wilderness.

We followed it northeastward until twilight, the roar of the falls gradually diminishing behind us, and came at length into an open space upon the banks of the swift-running river which carried the shattered waters into the Cadarakui Lake. Close to the bank stood a flagstaff, and from its summit floated the white ensign of France.

At the foot of the staff, as if resting secure under the folds of the flag, rose the walls of a substantial log house. Behind it were a collection of smaller huts and lodges of bark.

A large, stout man, with very greasy, lanky black hair, hailed us from the log house as we approached.

"*Hola!*" he shouted in French. "Who comes so free from the westward without canoe or fur-packs?"

"A poor, miserable rascal of a forest-runner," I called back gaily.

He discarded an Indian pipe he had been nursing in his hand, and came across to me at a surprizingly rapid gait for one of his build.

"And who might this 'poor, miserable rascal of a forest-runner' be?" he demanded. "These are the King's grounds, and we must know who comes and goes."

"*Mon Dieu!*" I appealed in mock consternation to the stars. "But it is a hard man to deal with! Will you have an objection, *monsieur,* to the name of Jean Courbevoir?"

"None in the world, Jean," he returned promptly, "if you have your trading-permit with you. But who is the good savage with you?"

Nobody had told me anything of a trading-permit, and I fought for time.

"You call him good with justice, *monsieur*— By the way, what is your name?"

"They call me Joncaire," he said with a trace of grimness.

"Joncaire! *Mort de ma vie!*"

And I appealed with all the precision my memory would permit to the calendar of the saints.

"The very man I have been searching for!"

"What? How is that?" he asked.

"Ah, but that is a tale! I can not believe it now! Am I in very truth on French soil once more?"

"This is the Magazin Royal," he returned. "As for French soil, *mon brave,* I do not see how you could have been off it."

"Off it?" I repeated.

"Off it," he replied impatiently. "Since his Most Catholic Majesty hath a just claim to all lands in these parts—on this side of Hudson's River, at any rate."

"To be sure, to be sure," I assented quickly. "But, Monsieur de Joncaire, you will be interested to know there is an accursed tribe of savages who do not believe as you do."

"Is that so, Jean? And who may they be?"

"The Messesagues."

His face lighted up.

"They are in de Tonty's country. And how is the dear Alphonse?"

"Fleeing for his life, no less."

"Fleeing? How is it he has not come here?"

"Those same accursed Messesagues, *monsieur.* They rose up against us, and Monsieur de Tonty must flee to the northward and make the journey through the country of the Hurons."

"But you escaped?" he pressed.

"Verily, *monsieur;* and 'tis this good savage who walks

beside me who did it. He has a kindness for me, and when we were out hunting informed me of the rising against Monsieur de Tonty and escorted me here."

A look of grave concern overspread Joncaire's face.

"Are you certain of this, Jean?"

"Beyond doubt, *monsieur;* for my friend, the Wolf here, smuggled a message from me to Monsieur de Tonty, who bade me come at once to you that you might hold up all west-bound canoes."

"Aye, Alphonse would have done so," approved Joncaire. "Well, I always told him he would have trouble with the Messesagues. He was too easy with them. They are used to the heavy rule of the Iroquois, and they misunderstand kindness. *Ma foi!* This is bad news you bring, Jean. Was there much loss in furs?"

"Sad! 'Tis very sad!" I said ambiguously. "All gone!"

"And that reminds me," he went on, "you have not shown me your trading-permit."

"Trading-permit, monsieur?" I said. "Why—why—*monsieur* forgets that I am not a free-trader. I was in Monsieur de Tonty's employ. I had no permit. Nor, indeed, *monsieur,* have I any furs. Therefore what need would Jean Courbevoir have for a trading-permit?"

"Humph!" he growled. "Have you been long in Canada, Jean?"

"But this year, *monsieur.*"

"And you already speak the tongue of the savages?"

I nearly fell into this trap, but bethought myself of the danger in time.

"Oh, no, *monsieur;* only a word here and there."

"But this savage of yours?"

"Oh, he is like a dog. So faithful, so devoted! And he learns French readily, too."

"Humph!" growled Joncaire again. "And where do you come from, Jean?"

Something in his speech warned me—the liquid slurr of the South.

"I, *monsieur?*" I replied innocently. "Oh, I am of Picardy. But *monsieur* is of the South—no? of Provence?"

All the suspicion fled from Joncaire's face, and in its stead blossomed a broad smile.

"*Peste!*" he ejaculated. "'Tis a clever lad! And how knew you that, Jean?"

I was overjoyed—and in no need to simulate my sentiments. This was good fortune.

"Was I not camping beside the Regiment de Provence when we were on the Italian frontier? 'Tis a pleasant way those lads have of talking. And such good companions with the bottle!"

"You know, Jean, you know!"

Joncaire was delighted with me.

"Ah, yes, *monsieur,*" I asserted modestly. "Ah, for some of that warm Southern wine at this moment instead of the accursed rum. Rum is good only for savages."

"You say truth," applauded Joncaire. "Come your ways within, Jean, and you shall taste of the blood of La Belle France—although it be not our Provence vintage. By the way, do you know Provence?"

"I can not say so with honesty, *monsieur,*" I fenced, "although I have been in Arles."

"In Arles!"

He flung his arms around my neck.

"Jean, I love you, my lad! I was born in St. Remi, which is but a short distance out in the diocese. Does that *sacré* Henri Ponteuse yet have the tavern at the corner of the Grande Place?"

I decided to take a long leap in the dark, and answered:

"But no, *monsieur;* he is dead these ten years. 'Tis his——"

I was about to say "son," but luckily Joncaire interrupted in time.

"'Twill be that fine lass, Rosette, his niece!" he exclaimed. "Ah, I knew it."

"And she has taken a husband," I encouraged him, now so far committed that I might not draw back.

"Not young Voisin, the miller's son?"

"No, *monsieur;* a stranger from a far corner of the diocese. One Michel."

We were now in the entrance of the log house, and Joncaire opened wide the door.

"Jean, you are a lad in a million!" he pronounced. "You shall drink deep. I have some wine which Bigon the *intendant* fetched out for a few of us—you will understand you must say naught of it hereafter; it never paid duty. Aye, we shall make a fine night of it, and you shall tell me of all that has passed in Arles these many years.

"*Mon Dieu!* I could weep at the thought of the time I have spent in this place of devils; and my children will never know the country that their father came from!"

Ta-wan-ne-ars would have followed us indoors, but Joncaire turned and pushed him down on the doorstep.

"Sit, sit," he said kindly in a tongue which Ta-wan-ne-ars afterward told me was the Messesague dialect. "You shall have your food here."

And to me—

"Our own Indians I will tolerate when I must, but I want no strange savages stealing my stores."

"*Monsieur* has a family here?" I asked as we took our seats at a rough table in the front room.

"Here! Never! Although I have one son who will soon be able to carry on his father's work."

"One son? That is too bad. Now in Picardy——"

"*Mort de ma vie!* Would you talk to me of your Picards? Young man, each Autumn that I return to Montreal—and it has been many Autumns, let me tell you—Madame de Joncaire has a new little one to introduce to me."

His face softened.

"Bless me if I know how that old lady does it!" he

sighed. "We have ten now—or maybe 'tis twelve. But I am not sure. I must count up when I return this year."

He clapped his hands, and a soldier in the undress uniform of the French marine troops, who formed the major part of the garrison of Canada, entered.

"François," announced Joncaire, "this is Jean Courbevoir, who will be my guest until he departs. He has been in Arles, François. Remember that. It should be a part of each young man's training to visit Arles.

"What he orders you will render to him. Now bring us the flagon of wine which Monsieur Bigon sent out this Spring."

The soldier saluted me as if I were a marshal of France, and brought in the flagon of the *intendant's* wine with the exquisite reverence which only a son of France could bestow upon the choicest product of the soil of France.

"Pour it out, François," commanded Joncaire.

The soldier hesitated.

"And Monsieur de Lery?" he said.

"A thousand million curses!" exploded Joncaire. "Am I to wait for him? Am I to sacrifice my choicest wine in his gullet?"

"Who is Monsieur de Lery?" I asked as François filled a thick mug with the ruby juice.

"What? You do not know him? That is a good one, that! I should like to have had him hear you say it. But do you mean you do not know of him?"

"*Monsieur* will remember I am of the wilderness," I protested.

"True, true. And this pompous whipper-snapper who sets out to teach Louis Thomas de Joncaire, Sieur de Chabert, his duty, after thirty-five years on the frontier—pah!"

He drained his mug, and pushed it toward François for more.

"But you have not told me who he is, *monsieur*," I said.

"He is——"

"Monsieur de Lery enters," interposed François with a glance at the doorway.

XVI

TRAPPED

A SLENDER, wiry little man in a wig several sizes too big for him strode into the room. He had a thin face, near-sighted eyes and a bulging forehead. He favored me with a curious glance, nodded to Joncaire and took a seat across the table from me.

My host made a wry smile and motioned to François to bring a third mug.

"*Hola,* Monsieur de Lery," he said. "This is a gallant young forest-runner, one Jean Courbevoir, who has come to tell me that charming idiot Alphonse de Tonty has been chased out of Le de Troit by the Messesagues. Jean, Monsieur de Lery is the King's engineer officer in Canada."

"Another case of a log fortification, I suppose," remarked de Lery sarcastically in a dry, crackling voice.

He paid no attention to the introduction to me.

"You gentlemen will never learn," he added.

"You must think we grow louis d'or instead of furs in Canada," growled Joncaire. "Be sure, we of the wilderness posts are the most anxious to have stone walls around us. Well, what headway have you made?"

"I have traced out the lines of the central mass," replied de Lery, taking a gulp of the wine. "Tomorrow I shall mark out a surrounding work of four bastions to encompass it."

"And you insist it shall be at the confluence of the river and the lake?"

"There can be no doubt 'tis the proper spot," declared de Lery didactically, "both from the engineering and the strategical points of view."

"But I am telling you—I, Louis Thomas de Joncaire, Sieur de Chabert, who have been thirty-five years in this accursed country—that if you do so you will have no sheltered anchorage for shipping. Moreover, you will sacrifice the buildings we have erected here."

De Lery pushed back his mug.

"All very well," he answered; "but your position here does not command the lake. If the English chose they could blockade you in the river, and your anchorage would go for naught. Furthermore, there is great difficulty in navigating craft this far up the river against a current of nearly three leagues an hour."

"Bah!" exclaimed Joncaire. "You know everything."

"I am an engineer," returned de Lery pompously. "You are a soldier. I should not attempt to dictate to you."

Joncaire appealed to me. He was on his third mug of wine, and the mellow stuff had rekindled his odd friendship for me.

"Come, *mon Jean,*" he cried, "what do you say to it? You are a man of experience. You have been to Arles. I think you implied that you had seen service in the Army in France?"

"As a sergeant only, *monsieur,*" I answered modestly. "In the Regiment de la Reine."

"A famous corps," he proclaimed. "Your opinion has weight with me, Jean. You are a man of sense and judgment. What is your opinion on this subject we debate?"

"*Ma foi, monsieur,*" I said cautiously, "I am scarcely fitted to discuss it with two gentlemen of your wisdom and experience. I am frank to say I do not understand the issue."

"De Lery, we will leave the matter to this youth's honest candor," suggested Joncaire.

"With your favor, *monsieur,* we will not," replied the engineer decisively.

He rose from his seat.

"Speaking for myself, I have had sufficient wine, and I shall retire. If the masons bring in the loads of stone we expect in the morning, we shall be able to lay the first course by noon."

Joncaire twisted his face into a grimace as de Lery ascended a steep flight of ladder-stairs to an upper story.

"What a man to live with!" he apostrophized. "*Mon Dieu,* nobody knows the agonies I suffer! Me, I am a man of compassion, of friendliness, of respect for another's opinion. But that man—*tonnerrr-rrr-rr-re de Dieu!* For him there are no opinions but his own."

"What is the difficulty, *monsieur?*" I inquired sympathetically.

"Why, at last I have persuaded this stupid, timorous government of ours to build me a proper fort. 'Tis the only way we shall hold the *sacré* English in check.

"You have intelligence, Jean. You know the country to the West. 'Tis manifest that with a fort here we can control in some measure the intercourse betwixt the western tribes and the English. Also, we shall have a constant threat here to keep the Iroquois at peace."

"That is readily understood, *monsieur.*"

"Of course. Well, I worked up Vaudreuil to approve it, obtained the grants from Paris, secured the necessary mechanics—and then they sent this popinjay to supervise the work. I had pitched on this site here. He would have none of it. No, he must overturn all my plans and put the new works several miles down the river where it runs into the lake.

"And he will not listen to reason. He is so conceited with himself because he has been charged with all the works of fortification in Canada."

"Are there others then, *monsieur?*" I asked casually, burying my nose in the wine-mug.

"Aye, to be sure. He is to build a wall around Montreal, and to strengthen the *enceinte* of Quebec."

"But we are at peace with these *sacré* English," I objected.

Joncaire, now thoroughly convivial, winked at me over the rim of his mug.

"For the present, yes. But how long, Jean? Ah, my lad, you are young, and I can see you have the brains to carry you far. Here in Canada family counts for less than in Paris. But after all you are not of those who know the high politics of the day—not yet."

"I am a poor, ignorant youth whom *monsieur* is pleased to honor," I said humbly.

"And *monsieur* is pleased to instruct you," he answered. "Yes, we can not go on as we have been, Jean. Every year that passes the English grow in strength, and we become weaker; I speak now in matters of trade; for after all, lad, the country which obtains the mastery in trade must be the military master of any contending nation. I may be only a simple soldier, but so much I have learned."

"Ah, but *monsieur* is pleased to be down-hearted!" I cried. " 'Tis plain we are stronger than the English. Are not our posts stretched thousands of miles beyond theirs?"

"Pouf! What of that? We are a colony of soldiers and traders, well armed and disciplined. They are an infinitely larger group of colonies with only a few soldiers and traders, but many husbandmen. Give them time, and they will obtain such a grip on the soil of the wilderness that they can not be pried loose. But if we use our temporary advantage, and keep them from winning supremacy in the trade with the savages, then, my Jean, we may force a war upon them at an early day, and we shall win."

He sat back, and eyed me triumphantly.

"Surely we have that supremacy now!"

He winked at me again, and drew from a drawer in the table a heavy book such as accounts are kept in.

"Jean," he said, "I am about to disclose to you a secret—which is not a secret, because every trader who works for himself is acquainted with it."

He flipped through the pages.

"Here is the account for this post for the year just ended. We handled a total of 204 'green' deerskins and 23 packets of various kinds of furs. On these we cleared a profit of 2,382 livres, 3 sols, 9 deniers,[1] which would not come anywhere near covering the operating expenses of the post. You will find the same story at every post from here to the Mississippi."

"Why, *monsieur?*"

"These *sacré* English! First they turn the Iroquois against us—and in that success, I am bound to say, they have been ably assisted by ourselves;[2] then they build the post of Fort Oswego, at the foot of the Onondaga's River on Irondequoit Bay;[3] then they send out a swarm of young men to trap and shoot in the Indian country; then they pass this accursed law that forbids us obtaining Indian goods from the New York merchants! *Peste,* what a people! They have us in a noose."

I shook my head dolefully.

"Ah, *monsieur,* you make me very sorrowful," I said. "I came out to Canada thinking to make my fortune, but if what you say be true, I am more likely to be killed by the English."

"No, no, it's not so bad as that," he answered quickly. "The governor-general has waked up. It seems that in France they are not quite ready for another war, but we are charged to make preparations as rapidly as possible. There is an emissary coming soon from Paris, who will have instructions for the frontier posts and the friendly Indians.

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1 About $476.

2 Joncaire was one of the few Frenchmen who had the confidence of the Iroquois. He had been captured as a young man by the Senecas and adopted into that tribe.

3 Now Oswego, N. Y.

It may be we can persuade the English to be stupid enough to revoke this law of theirs. In any case, my Jean, you will have heard of the Doom Trail?"

I crossed myself devoutly.

"I have heard nothing good of it, *monsieur*," I said fearfully.

"Humph; I don't doubt it. And mind you, Jean, for myself, I do not like that kind of business. But after all 'tis the trade over the Doom Trail which keeps you and me in our jobs. Without it—well, this post would shut down. And they do say at Quebec that if we can start a revolution in England for this Pretender of theirs and war at the same time, we shall be able to take the whole continent from them."

"And who is this emissary you spoke of?" I asked, thinking to extract more information from the bibulous Joncaire.

"Not of your——"

There was a commotion at the door.

"Bind the Indian," shouted a voice in French. "Hah, I thought so! We meet again, Ormerod!"

De Veulle stood on the threshold, his rifle leveled at my breast.

"Bring the Indian inside here," he called behind him. "We'll have a look at him in the light."

A group of Cahnuagas, frightfully painted, with their grotesque bristling feather headdresses, hustled Ta-wan-ne-ars into the room.

But now Joncaire asserted himself.

"What do you mean by this, Monsieur de Veulle?" he demanded with a cold displeasure which showed no signs of his recent indulgences. "This man is a forest-runner, Jean Courbevoir, a messenger from de Tonty. The Indian is a Messesague—as you should see by his paint and beadwork."

"Bah!" sneered de Veulle. "They fooled you. The Indian is Ta-wan-ne-ars, of the Seneca Wolves, War Chief of the Iroquois. The white man is Harry Ormerod, an

English spy and a deserter from the Jacobites. He was stationed in Paris for some years, and recently was sent to New York. Burnet, the Governor of New York, dispatched him here to spy out what you were doing. 'Twas fortunate I had an errand to Jagara, for he seems to have deluded you completely."

"That may be so," assented Joncaire; "but it happens that I command here. These men are my prisoners. You will order your Indians from the room. François, get your musket and stand guard."

De Veulle drew a paper from a pocket inside his leather shirt and presented it to Joncaire with irritating deliberation.

"Here," he said, "you will find my warrant from the King himself to exercise what powers I deem necessary along the frontier. Only the governor-general may overrule me."

Joncaire studied the paper.

"That is so," he admitted. "But I tell you this, de Veulle, you have a bad record on the frontier for a trouble-maker. But for you I should have had the Senecas and Onondagas in our interest before this. I write to Quebec by the first post, demanding a check upon your activities. We have too much at stake to permit you to jeopardize it."

"At De-o-nun-de-ga-a it is known that Ta-wan-ne-ars and his brother Ormerod journeyed to Jagara," interposed the Seneca in his own language. "Does Joncaire think the Senecas will be quiet when one of their chiefs is given up to the Keepers of the Doom Trail for torment?"

"The Senecas will be told that you never reached Jagara," replied de Veulle before Joncaire could speak.

"I will have nothing to do with it," declared the commandant of the post. "Spies they may be, and as such they may be imprisoned; but I will have nothing to do with turning them over to the Keepers. De Veulle, this is on your own head."

"I am content," said de Veulle with a mocking smile.

Joncaire turned to me.

"Well, my Jean," he said soberly, "whatever your name may be, you have gotten yourself into a nasty mess. You will be lucky if you die quickly. This is what comes of trying to fool old Papa Joncaire."

"You will admit that I fooled you," I replied as lightly as I could.

"You did," he conceded, "and you are nearly the first."

"Will you do me a favor in memory of Arles—I have really visited that renowned city—*monsieur?*"

"Gladly."

"Get word sometime to Peter Corlaer that I fooled you, and 'twas no fault of mine I was taken."

He clapped me on the back.

"That's the spirit, *mon brave!* I'll do it without fail. And my advice to you is to pick the first chance to die, no matter how it may be. These Keepers—*peste!* They are a bad lot. They are artists in torment. 'Tis part of their religion, which I will say they still practise, even though Père Hyacinthe were to excommunicate me."

"Better not let the worthy priest hear you," admonished de Veulle with his mocking smile. "Have you finished your homily and last word to the condemned?"

"I have finished my last word to you," snarled Joncaire.

"Perhaps, *monsieur,*" I said, "you have never chanced to hear of a certain duel with small-swords in the ——"

De Veulle struck me with all his strength across the mouth.

"Here," he called to the waiting Cahnuagas, "bind him —and make a sure job of it. Be not careful of his comfort."

Joncaire looked him up and down with indescribable contempt.

"There is a bad air in here, Monsieur Englishman," he said. "Even the company of that ass de Lery is preferable to this miserable person. I bid you adieu."

But as he was about to climb the stairs de Lery had ascended, de Veulle called him back.

"One moment! Speaking officially, Monsieur de Joncaire, I desire you to send out belts to all friendly tribes, summoning them to a council-fire which will be held here by the King's command in August."

Joncaire bowed.

"It shall be done," he said.

"Now then"—de Veulle addressed me—"we will consider your case. Are the bonds sufficiently tight?"

I had been bound with strips of rawhide which cut into every muscle. The question was superfluous.

"Pick them up," he said to the Cahnuagas. "We will get back to the canoes."

One of the Keepers objected, seeming to suggest that they rest the night at least; but de Veulle silenced him with a frown.

"We start at once," he said. "There will be time to rest after we are out in the lake."

Ta-wan-ne-ars and I were slung like sacks of grain each upon the shoulders of a pair of warriors and so carried past several phlegmatically interested French soldiers to the bank of the river. Here we were laid carefully in the bottoms of separate canoes, which were shoved out into the swirling current and borne swiftly down-stream into the spreading waters of the Cadarakui Lake.

Despite the tightness of my bonds and the numbness they induced, I fell asleep, rocked by the easy motion of the canoe as it was driven along by the powerful arms of the Cahnuagas, who crouched in line, one behind the other, their paddles dipping in and out of the water like tireless machines.

XVII

LA VIERGE DU BOIS

A DASH of water awakened me. One of the Cahnuagas was leaning down, his hideous face close to mine, his fingers wrestling with the knots in the rawhide bonds.

"You can not lie idle, my distinguished guest," called de Veulle from his place at the stern. "You must keep us dry."

As the rawhide strips were unwound I was able to sit up and look over the frail bark side. We were out of sight of land, and a moderate breeze was raising a slight swell, the crest of which occasionally broke over our bow. In the other canoe Ta-wan-ne-ars already was at work with a bark scoop.

The Cahnuagas were uneasy, and at times they muttered amongst themselves; but de Veulle kept them at the paddles, working in relays of four. It said much for his hold on the Indians that he was able to persuade them to navigate the treacherous waters of the open lake, a feat the savages will never attempt except under compulsion.

All of that day we were isolated on the restless surface of the huge inland sea. Just before dusk of the second day we sighted a rocky coast, and sheered away from it. Two nights later we passed a group of lights to the north, and the Cahnuagas murmured "Cadaraqui." Indeed, 'twas the French fort of that name, the key to the westerly defenses of Canada and the St. Lawrence outlet from the lake.[1] On the sixth day we passed out of the lake into the narrow

[1] Later Fort Frontenac.

channel of the great river, and landed in the evening at a palisaded post on the southern bank.

So far I had been treated fairly well. My captors had shared with me their meager fare of parched corn and jerked meat; and if I had been compelled to bale out the canoe incessantly, it was equally true that they had labored at the paddles night and day. It was also true that de Veulle had made me the constant subject of his gibes and kicks and had encouraged the Cahnuagas—and God knows they required no encouragement—to maul me at pleasure. Yet the frailty of the canoe had forbidden indulgence in as much roughness as they desired.

But now everything was changed. My legs were left unbound, but with uncanny skill the savages lashed back my arms until well-nigh every bit of circulation was stopped in them and each movement I was forced to make became an act of torture. The one recompense for my sufferings was that for the first time since our capture I had the company of Ta-wan-ne-ars, and I was able to profit by his stoical demeanor in resisting the impulse to vent my anger against de Veulle.

"Say nothing, brother," he counseled me when I panted my hate, "for every word you say will afford him satisfaction."

"I wish I had staved in the canoe in the middle of the lake," I exclaimed bitterly.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars, too, thought of that," he admitted. "Yet must we have died with our tormenters, and perhaps if we wait we may escape and live to slay them at less cost to ourselves."

"It is not likely," I answered, for my spirits were very low. "What is this place? Where are we?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars looked around the landscape, rapidly dimming in the twilight. We had been left in custody of the Indians on the river-bank whilst de Veulle conversed with three white men who had emerged from the palisades as we scrambled ashore.

"This place Ta-wan-ne-ars does not know," he replied. "Yet it is on the river St. Lawrence, for there is no other stream of this size. I think, brother, that de Veulle is taking us to La Vierge du Bois."

"It matters little where he takes us," I returned ill-naturedly. "Our end is like to be the same in any case."

"At the least," said Ta-wan-ne-ars with a smile, "we shall have solved the riddle of the Doom Trail."

"And what will that avail us?" I countered. "Joncaire told me all I sought to know of Jagara—but he told it to a dead man."

"Not yet dead, brother," Ta-wan-ne-ars corrected me gently. "We have still a long way to go—and we have our search."

"Which is like to lead us into the hands of ——," I said rudely.

But de Veulle and the three strange Frenchmen walked up at that moment, and Ta-wan-ne-ars was spared the necessity of an answer.

" 'Tis well," de Veulle was saying. "We will rest the night, then. I'll lodge my prisoners in the stockade."

"And there is naught else?" asked one of the others.

"The letter to Père Hyacinthe—don't forget that."

Whereat they all four laughed with a kind of sinister mystery and cast glances of amusement at us.

"I would I might see the Moon Feast," said another.

"Some day, if you are accepted amongst the Ga-go-sa, you may," returned de Veulle. "Be ready with the letter, I beg you. I must start early with the daylight if I am to be in time for the feast."

The Cahnuagas drove us from the bank with kicks and blows of their paddle-blades, and the white men followed leisurely, laughing now and then as we dodged some particularly vicious attack upon our heads and faces. As it was, when we were flung into a bare log-walled room within the palisade we were covered with bruises. 'Twas the real beginning of our torment.

In the morning our arms were untied and we were given a mess of half-cooked Indian meal. Then the rawhides were rebound, and we set forth upon a trail that led from the river southeastward into the forest. A Cahnuaga walked behind each of us, tomahawk in hand. De Veulle himself brought up the rear, his musket always ready.

I prefer not to think of that day. The heat of early Summer was in the air, and although it was cooler in the forest than in the open, a host of insects attacked us; and with our hands bound, we could not fight them off. Ta-wan-ne-ars had the thick hide of his race, and they bothered him less than they did me; but we were both in agony by the time we made camp and the smoke-smudge kindled by our guards in self-protection gave us temporary relief.

The next day was much the same. If we hesitated in our pace or staggered, the savage nearest to us used the flat of his tomahawk or his musket-butt. Ta-wan-ne-ars walked before me in the column, and the sight of his indifference, his disdainful air toward all the slights put upon him, maintained my courage when otherwise it must have yielded.

On the third day, shortly after noon, I was astonished to hear faintly, but very distinctly, a bell ringing in the forest. And I remembered the words of the Cahnuaga who had been last of his brethren to die in that fight in the glade on the Great Trail—

"A building with a tower and a bell that rings."

"La Vierge du Bois welcomes you," hailed de Veulle from behind us. "The bell rings you in. Ah, there will be bright eyes and flushed cheeks at sight of you!"

He laughed in a pleasant, melodious way.

"White cheeks to flush for you, Ormerod, and red cheeks to grow duskier for our friend the chief here! What a fluttering of hearts there will be!"

Could I have wrenched my hands free I would have snatched a tomahawk from the Cahnuaga before me. But I did what Ta-wan-ne-ars did—held my head straight and

walked as if I had not heard. Something told me the Seneca suffered as much as I.

We did not hear the bell again; but in mid-afternoon the forest ended upon the banks of a little river, and in the distance a wooden tower showed through the trees. As we drew nearer other buildings appeared, arranged in irregular fashion about a clearing. One of pretentious size stood by itself inside a palisade.

Cahnuagas, including women and children, swarmed along the trail with guttural cries. A big, red-headed man stepped from a building which was evidently a storehouse. 'Twas Bolling, and with a yell of delight he snatched a block of wood from the ground and hurled it at my head.

"Curse me, 'tis the renegade and his red shadow!" he shouted. "We are in great luck! Do but wait until Tom knows you are here, my friend. The stake awaits you!"

He walked beside us, rubbing his hands together in high glee, and discoursing with seemingly expert knowledge on the precise character of the various kinds of torment we should undergo. From time to time he would break off to call upon the Cahnuagas for confirmation or new ideas, and they never failed to support him. Once in a while he kicked us or beat us with the nearest stick he could reach.

His attentions drew a considerable crowd; and so when we entered the single rude street of the settlement 'twas to find the whole population awaiting us. The gate in the stockade around the big house was open, and with a thrill I realized that a swirl of color there meant Marjory. Murray's stately figure I identified at a distance.

I think she did not know me at first. There was no reason why she should. My leather garments were rent and torn, my hair was tangled and matted with briers and thorns from the underbrush, my face was scratched and bleeding. I was thin and gaunt, and I might not walk upright, although I tried, for the rawhide thongs bowed my shoulders.

But Murray knew me instantly, and a flare of exultation

lighted his face. Behind him, too, stood the animal-shape of Tom, long arms almost trailing on the ground; and the negro's yellow eyes seemed to expand with tigerish satisfaction.

De Veulle halted us directly in front of the gate.

"An old acquaintance has consented to visit us," he said.

And with a shock of grief I saw comprehension dawn in Marjory's face. But she did not flush crimson, as de Veulle had prophesied. She blenched white. I knew by that she had been long enough at La Vierge du Bois to appreciate the temper of its inhabitants.

"I seem to recollect the tall Indian beside our friend, likewise," observed Murray.

" 'Tis his companion of the interview at Cawston's in New York," rejoined de Veulle. "What, Mistress Marjory, you have not forgotten the rash youth who was always threatening or badgering us?"

Her lips moved mechanically, but 'twas a minute before she could force her voice to obey.

"I remember," she said.

Murray took snuff precisely and addressed himself to me.

"Master Juggins, Master Juggins—oh, I beg your pardon! I keep confusing your names. Master Ormerod, then—did I not warn you to leave the Doom Trail alone?"

I laughed.

"I have not been near the Doom Trail," I answered.

"No," answered de Veulle. "I found him cozening that old fool Joncaire at Jagara."

"So!"

Murray pursed his lips.

" 'Tis a serious offense."

"For which, it seems, Joncaire is not to be permitted to take revenge," I added.

"You are a dangerous youth, Master Ormerod," admonished Murray gravely. "You had opportunity to win free of your past misdemeanors, you will allow, yet you would hear none of my advice. No, you must mix in affairs which

did not concern you. And as I warned you, it hath been to your sore prejudice. Much as I——''

Marjory flung out her arms in a gesture of appeal.

''Why do you talk so much, sir?'' she cried. ''What have you in mind? This man is an Englishman! Is he to be given up to the savages?''

Murray surveyed her gravely.

''Tut, tut, my dear! Is this the way to conduct in public? 'Given up to the savages,' forsooth! The young man is a traitor, a renegade—and a sorry fool into the bargain. He is in an uncomfortable situation, thanks to his own mistakes and heedlessness. He hath meddled in matters beyond his comprehension or ability. We must reckon up the harm he hath done, and assess his punishment in proportion.''

''Just what do you mean by that, sir?'' she demanded coldly.

He brushed a speck of snuff from his sleeve.

''Frankly, my dear lass, I can not tell you as yet.''

''I think you mock me,'' she asserted. ''And I tell you, sir, I will be party to no such crime against humanity. You talk of traitors. I am wondering if there is more than one meaning to the word.''

She turned with a flutter of garments and sped into the house. De Veulle eyed Murray rather quizzically, but the arch-conspirator gave no evidence of uneasiness.

''You shall tell me about it,'' he said, as if nothing had happened. ''Meantime I suppose they may be lodged with the Keepers.''

''Yes,'' agreed de Veulle; ''but I desire to give some particular instructions for their entertainment.''

''Do so; do so, by all means,'' answered Murray equably. ''But wait; here comes Père Hyacinthe.''

The Indians surrounding us huddled back, cringing against the stockade, their eyes glued upon a tall, thin figure in a threadbare black cassock of the Jesuit order. He walked with a peculiar halting gait. His face was

emaciated, the skin stretched taut over prominent bones. His eyes blazed out of twin caverns.

Parts of his ears were gone, and as he drew nearer I saw that his face was criss-crossed by innumerable tiny scars. When he raised his hand in blessing the Indians I realized that two fingers were missing, and those which were left were twisted and gnarled as by fire.

"Whom have we here?" he called in a loud, harsh voice.

"Two prisoners, reverend sir," replied Murray. "English spies caught at Jagara by the vigilance of Monsieur de Veulle."

"Are they heretics?" demanded the priest.

"I fear I have never conversed with Master Ormerod concerning his religious beliefs," said Murray whimsically. "I should add, by the way, father, that the young man is the spy of whom I told you, who crossed upon our ship with us."

The priest peered closely at me.

"Well, sir," he asked brusquely, "are you a son of the true faith?"

"Not the one you refer to, sir," I said.

"And this savage here?"

"He believes, quite devoutly, I should say, in the gods of his race."

The Jesuit locked and unlocked his fingers nervously.

"I fear, *monsieur,* that you will suffer torment at the hands of my poor children here," he said. "Will you not repent before it is too late?"

"But will you stand by and see your children torture an Englishman in time of peace?" I asked.

His eyes fairly sparked from the shelter of their cavernous retreats.

"Peace?" he rasped. "There is no peace—there can be no peace—between England, the harlot nation, and holy France. France follows her destiny, and her destiny is to rule America on behalf of the Church."

"Yet peace there is," I insisted.

"I refuse to admit it. We know no peace here. We are at war, endless war, physically, spiritually, mentally, with England. If you come amongst us, you do so at your bodily peril. But"—and the challenge left his voice and was replaced by a note of pleading, soft and compelling—"it may be, *monsieur,* that in your bodily peril you have achieved the salvation of your soul. Repent, I urge you, and though your body perish your soul shall live."

Murray and de Veulle stirred restlessly during this harangue, but the savages were so silent you could hear the birds in the trees. I was interested in this man, in his fanatic sincerity, his queer conception of life.

"But if I repented, as you say," I suggested, "would not you save my body?"

His eyes burned with contempt.

"Would you drive a bargain with God?" he cried. "For shame! Some may tolerate that, but I never will! What matters your miserable body! It has transgressed the rights of France. Let it die! But your soul is immortal; save that, I conjure you!"

"Aye; but do you think it Christian to permit a fellow-man, whether he be of your faith or not, to be tortured by savages?"

The contempt died in his eyes, and was replaced by a dreamy ecstasy.

"Death? What is death?" he replied. "And what matters the manner of death? Look at me, *monsieur.*"

He fixed my gaze on each of his infirmities.

"I am but the wreck of a man. These poor, ignorant children of the wilderness have worked their will with me, and because it was best for me God permitted it. Torture never hurt any man. It is excellent for the spirit. It will benefit you. If you must die——"

His voice trailed into nothingness.

De Veulle interposed.

"Reverend father," he said, "I have a letter for you

from Jacques Pourier. The rivermen would like you to give them a mass Sunday. 'Tis a long——"

"Give me the letter," he cried eagerly. "Ah, that is good reading! Sometimes I despair for my sons—aye, more than for the miserable children of the wilderness. But now I know that a seed grows in the hearts of some that I have doubted. I shall go gladly."

He turned to depart, retraced his steps and fixed me with his gaze that seemed almost to scorch the skin.

"Remember what I have said, *monsieur*. Repent, and in the joy which will come to your soul you will rejoice in your agony. You will triumph in it. Your heart will be uplifted by it. Do I not know! I have suffered myself, a whole day at the stake once, and again for half a day."

De Veulle winked at Murray as the priest limped away.

"I must send Jacques a barrel of brandy for this," he remarked; "but our Cahnuagas would be in the sulks if they could not celebrate the Moon Feast, and they stand in such fear of the worthy Hyacinthe that they would never risk his wrath."

"The Moon Feast!" exclaimed Murray. "True, I had forgotten. Well, 'twill be an excellent introduction to the customs of the savages for our friend the intruder."

" 'Twill make a great impression upon him," laughed de Veulle. "In fact, upon both of them. I have a surprize for our Iroquois captive as well. The Mistress of the False Faces awaits them."

"Then haste the dancing. Will you dine with us?"

De Veulle hesitated, looked longingly toward the end of the clearing and more longingly toward the house within the stockade which housed Marjory.

"Aye," he said at last.

He murmured some orders to our guards, kicked me out of his path and sauntered through the gateway beside Murray.

XVIII

THE MISTRESS OF THE FALSE FACES

WITH Bolling in active supervision and Tom hanging greedily on the flanks of the crowd, we were hustled through the clearing, past the chapel and an intervening belt of woodland, into a second and much larger open space, crammed with bark lodges and huts.

"A big village," I gasped to Ta-wan-ne-ars as I dodged a blow at my head.

" 'Tis the haunt of the Keepers," he replied. "See, there are Adirondacks and Shawendadies, as well as Cahnuagas. And those yonder are Hurons from north of the Lakes."

Bolling slashed him across the face with a strip of rawhide.

"Keep your breath for the torture-stake, you Iroquois cur!"

Ta-wan-ne-ars laughed at him.

"Red Jack can only fight with a whip," he said. "But when Ta-wan-ne-ars holds a tomahawk he runs."

Bolling struck at him again, but the restless horde of our tormenters pried the ruffian away as some new group pushed to the front to have a look at the prisoners and deal a blow or two. The throng became so dense that individual castigation was impossible, and we were tossed along like chips in a whirlpool.

In the end we were hurled, head over heels, into a natural amphitheater on the far side of the village, where a back-

ground of dark pines walled in a wide surface of hard-beaten, grassless ground. Two stakes stood ready, side by side, in the center, and our captors tore off our tattered clothes and lashed us to these with whoops of joy.

So we stood, naked and bound, ankle, knee, thigh, chest and armpit, whilst the sun, setting behind the village, flooded the inferno with mellow light and an army of fiends, men, women and children, pranced around us. For myself, I was dazed and fearful, but Ta-wan-ne-ars again showed me the better road.

"The Keepers scream like women," he shouted, in order to make himself heard. "Have you never taken captives before?"

They shrieked a medley of abuse at him, but once more he compelled their attention by force of will.

"Are you afraid to let Ta-wan-ne-ars and his brother run the gantlet?" he demanded.

A squat Cahnuaga chief grinned and shook his head.

"We do not want you to tire yourself," he answered. "You would not be able to last so long under torture."

"You are afraid of us," jeered Ta-wan-ne-ars. "You know that if we were free we could escape from your whole tribe. You are women. We scorn you. Do you know what has become of the seven warriors Murray sent to pursue us on the Great Trail?"

Silence prevailed.

"Yes, there were seven of them," gibed Ta-wan-ne-ars. "And there were three of us. And where are they? I will tell you, Cahnuaga dogs, Adirondack dogs, Shawendadie dogs, Huron dogs. Crawl closer on your bellies while I tell you.

"Their scalps hang in the lodge of Ta-wan-ne-ars—seven scalps of the Keepers who could not fight against real men. The scalps of seven who called themselves warriors and who were so rash that they tried to fight three."

A howl of anger answered him.

"Begin the torment," yelled Bolling.

Tom drew a wicked knife and ran toward us, his yellow eyes aflame. But the squat Cahnuaga chief pushed him back.

"They are to be held for the Moon Feast," he proclaimed. "See, the Mistress comes. Stand back, brothers."

The sound of a monotonous wailing filled the air, joining itself with the evening breeze that sighed in the branches of the pines behind us. The crowd of savages drew away from us in sudden awe.

"Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta," they muttered to each other.

"What do they say?" I asked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

His eyes did not leave a long dark building on the edge of the amphitheater.

"The Mistress of the False Faces is coming," he replied curtly.

"And who is she?"

"The priestess of their devilish brotherhood."

Out from the long bark building wound a curious serpentine procession of men in fantastic head-masks, who danced along with a halting step. As they danced they sang in the weird monotone we had first heard. And behind them all walked slowly one without a mask, a young girl of upright, supple figure, her long black hair cascading about her bare shoulders. Her arms were folded across her breast. She wore only the short ga-ka-ah, or kilt, with moccasins on her feet.

The breath whistled in Ta-wan-ne-ars' nostrils as his chest heaved against its bonds, and I turned my head in amazement. The expression on his face was compounded of such demoniac ferocity as I had seen there once before—that, and incredulous affection.

"What is it?" I cried.

He did not heed me. He did not even hear me. His whole being was focussed upon the girl whose ruddy bronze skin gleamed through the masses of her hair, whose shapely

limbs ignored the beat of the music which governed the motions of her attendants.

The procession threaded its way at leisurely pace through the throngs of Indians, the girl walking as unconcernedly as if she were alone, her head held high, her eyes staring unseeingly before her.

"Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta," murmured the savages, bowing low.

The False Faces drew clear of the crowd, and danced solemnly around us. They paid us no attention, but when they had strung a complete circle around the stakes they faced inward and stopped, each one where he stood. For the first time the priestess, or Mistress as they called her, showed appreciation of her surroundings. She walked into the ring of masks and took up her position in front of us and between our stakes. She had not looked at us.

"Bow down, O my people," she chanted in a soft voice that was hauntingly sweet. "The False Faces are come amongst you, for it is again the period of our rule, and I, their Mistress, am to give you the word.

"Behold, the old moon is dying, and a new moon will be born again to us. The Powers of Evil, the Powers of Good and the Powers of Life are come together for the creation.

"Thrice fortunate are you that you recognize the rule of So-a-ka-ga-gwa,[1] for it brings you well-being, now and hereafter in the Land of Souls. Moreover, it brings you captives, and your feast will be graced by their sufferings."

She turned to face us, arms flung wide in a graceful gesture. I thought that Ta-wan-ne-ars would burst the thongs that bound him. His powerful chest expanded until they stretched.

"Ga-ha-no!" he sobbed.

She faltered, and her hands locked together involuntarily between her breasts. A light of apprehension dawned in her eyes, and for a moment I thought there was a trace of something more.

[1] The Moon—"the Light of the Night."

"Ga-ha-no!" pleaded Ta-wan-ne-ars.

But she regained the mastery of herself, and a mocking smile was his answer.

"They are no ordinary captives who will consecrate our feast," she continued her recitative.

"For one is a chief of the Iroquois and a warrior whose valor will resist the torment with pride. And the other is a white chief whose tender flesh will yield great delight and whose screams will give pleasure in our ears.

"Great is the triumph of the French chief de Veulle, who is himself of our order. Great is the triumph of the brave Keepers who aided him. Great will be the future triumphs which So-a-ka-ga-gwa will give us in return for these sacrifices.

"O my people, this is the Night of Preparation. When An-da-ka-ga-gwa,[1] the husband of So-a-ka-ga-gwa, retires to rest to mourn his dead wife and make ready for the new one he will take tomorrow, you must retire to your lodges, and put out your fires, and let down your hair.

"For in the night the spirits of Ha-nis-ka-o-no-geh [2] will come to hold communion with their servants, the False Faces, and they will be hungry for your souls.

"And this is my warning to you, O my people. Heed the warning of the Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta.

"And on the next night we will celebrate the Moon Feast, and I will dance for you the Moon Dance, and you shall dance the Torture Dance. And we will tear the hearts out of our enemies' breasts and grow strong from their sufferings."

She tossed her arms above her head, and the ring of False Faces burst into their high-pitched, nasal chant, and resumed the hesitant dancing step, their horrible masks wobbling from side to side, their painted bodies, naked save for the breech-clout, posturing in rhythm.

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[1] The Sun—"the Light of the Day."
[2] Hell—"the Dwelling-Place of Evil."

Their Mistress summoned the squat Cahnuaga chief, who seemed to be especially charged with our safe-keeping.

"You will unbind the captives from the stakes and place them in the Council-House," she said coldly. "If they are left out in the night, my brothers and sisters, the aids of Ha-ne-go-ate-geh will devour them. Feed them well, so that they will be strong to resist their torment, and tie them securely, and place a guard of crafty warriors over them. If they escape, you shall be the sacrifice at the Moon Feast."

The chief groveled before her.

"The commands of the Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta shall be obeyed," he promised. "And I pray you will hold off the Spirits of Evil tonight, for sometimes they have been overbold and have snatched our people from their lodges."

"You are safe this time if you heed my words," she answered, "for you have secured a sacrifice which will be very pleasing to So-a-ka-ga-gwa and her friends."[1]

Then she came up quite close to us. She looked at me with frank curiosity, and particularly at my hair, which was brown. But most of her attention was bestowed upon Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"So you remember me?" she said in a hard voice and speaking in the Seneca dialect.

"I remember you, Ga-ha-no," he answered. "But I see you do not remember me."

"Oh, well enough," she returned. "But I am no longer an ordinary woman. I am the Mistress of the False Faces——"

"And of a French snake," he added bitterly.

Her eyes flashed.

"I am not a squaw, which is what I should have been had you and my stupid father had your way with me!"

Ta-wan-ne-ars shook his head sadly.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars has only one regret that he is to die," he

[1] For this and other conversations I am indebted to Ta-wan-ne-ars, who translated them for me afterward.—H. O.

said. "That is because he can not live to find your lost soul and return it to you."

"My lost soul?" she repeated.

"Yes."

She laughed harshly.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars is a child," she said. "His heart is turned to water. He talks of things which are not. My soul is here." She tapped her left breast.

"It does not matter, however, for the Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta does not need a soul as other mortals do."

She turned on her heel abruptly, and followed the priests into the long bark house from which they had emerged.

The great mob of Indians melted away as soon as she left us. They all but fled in order to reach their lodges before sundown, and so hurried were our guards that in removing us from the stakes to the Council-House in the center of the village they forbore to beat or maltreat us.

In the Council-House they supplied us with a liberal meal of meat and vegetables. Then our bonds were replaced and we were covered with robes, whilst our guards cowered close to the fire in abject fear. They started at the slightest movement. Had we been able to stir hand or foot I think we might have won our freedom. But they had used care in binding us, and we lay inert as corpses.

"What do they fear?" I whispered to Ta-wan-ne-ars at length, desirous of hearing a friendly voice.

He roused himself from the gloom which enwrapped him.

"I do not know exactly, brother," he said. "These Cahnuagas are renegades from the Great League. This demon faith of theirs, with its False Faces and their Mistress, is a corruption of some of our ancient beliefs."

"But the Moon Feast they talk about," I persisted. "What is that?"

"It is some invention of their own," he replied. "Perhaps Murray or de Veulle helped them with it. My people know nothing of such things."

Through the bark walls of the house came the weird,

minor melody which had attended the appearance of the Mistress of the False Faces, mingled with shrieks, groans, screams and yells. Our guards huddled closer together. They abandoned their weapons and covered their heads with blankets. A drum throbbed near by, and at intervals sounded the wailing chant of the masked priests and the thudding of dancing feet.

Once a woman's voice soared, shrill and sweet, above the bedlam of noises, and Ta-wan-ne-ars' face was contorted as if rats were gnawing at his vitals.

"Your grief is very great, brother," I said.

"It is," he answered.

"Be at ease," I begged him, "for sure 'tis no fault of yours."

"Of that Ta-wan-ne-ars can not be sure," he replied somberly.

He struggled into a sitting position, resting his back against one of the supports of the roof.

"Cahnuaga dogs," he said—and his voice was not the voice of a captive, but of a chief—"what is it that you fear?"

The squat chief allowed his nose to protrude from the blanket which completely covered him.

"The False Faces dance with the Evil Ones in preparation for the birth of So-a-ka-ga-gwa," he mumbled. "They are hungry for human meat."

"Who told you that this was so?"

"The False Faces."

"But how do you know that it is not a lie?"

The chief shook his head vigorously.

"Even the white chief Murray stays within doors when the False Faces dance," he said.

"And the other white dog—de Veulle?"

"He is one of them. He was raised up by the Old Mistress when he lived amongst us before. It was he discovered the New Mistress."

Ta-wan-ne-ars sank down upon his back again.

"You fear shadows," he said contemptuously.

But the Cahnuagas were too demoralized to resent his taunts. The uproar outside increased in violence. Women's voices, some in dreadful protestation, some in eager ecstasy, joined in it. It was near, then at a distance, then returning. And occasionally that one shrill, sweet voice quelled the saturnalia and was lifted on a note of pagan exultation—only to be drowned in the thrumming of the drums.

Our fire dwindled and was rekindled. The night crept on toward the dawn. The monotony of the noises, the endless repetition, deadened the senses, and we slept. When I awakened, 'twas to see the daylight trickling through the smoke-hole in the roof. Ta-wan-ne-ars still slept beside me, the lines of his anguish hewn deep in his face. Our guards lay under their blankets, snoring lustily. The fire was dead. My bones and muscles ached from their confinement.

I regarded myself, naked, bruised, scarred, sprawled in this den of savages. A few months ago I had thought myself at the low ebb of my fortunes. The dungeons of the Tower and the headsman had awaited me. Now I faced death by torment in such horrid rites as my imagination could not depict. I had fled to the New World to improve my lot—and the improvement was like to consist of an early exit to another world which optimists proclaimed a better one.

Somewhere in the sunshine a bird began to sing, and my captors yawned and sat up. The squat chief, his fears of the night gone, kicked Ta-wan-ne-ars awake.

"This is the day of the Moon Feast," he said. "You will soon clamor to die."

XIX

THE MOON FEAST

WE WERE kicked and harried through the village to the Dancing-Place; but a messenger stayed us at the last minute, and our guards flogged us back into the Council-House. We were fed perfunctorily and given water to drink, then left to our own devices whilst the guards played a gambling game with peach-stones. So the morning dragged by until the sun was beginning to decline toward the west and a second messenger disturbed the wrangling players.

Thousands of Indians lined the narrow, dirty streets between the bark houses and lodges. They greeted us with a silence so intent that it was as arresting as a shout. Not a finger was laid upon us, not a voice was raised. Yet the fierce anticipation which gleamed in every face was more threatening than definite gestures.

We were yanked to our feet and pushed outside.

The guards hustled us along; and as we passed, the hordes of savages closed in behind us and flowed in a mighty, barbaric stream at our heels. Ahead of us opened the flat expanse of the Dancing-Place, with the two lonely stakes, flanked by piles of freshly gathered firewood, standing like portents of evil against the dark-green background of the pines which walled the rear of the amphitheater.

Ta-wan-ne-ars looked eagerly in every direction, but she whom he sought was not present nor were there visible any of her carrion crew of priests. Only the sinister faces of the negro, Tom, and Bolling, with his tangle of red hair,

stirred recollections in that alien, hostile mass. They, too, were under the spell of the gathering, a spell which seemed to have for its object the compression of the combined malevolence of the ferocious throng.

Our guards bound us to the stakes as they had the day before, and Ta-wan-ne-ars, with a significant glance at me, rallied them with the searching wit of his race.

"The Cahnuaga dogs are not used to taking captives," he commented. "They do not know what to do unless their white masters tell them. They are women. They should be tilling the field. They do not know how to torment real warriors."

When they were passing the thongs under his arm-pits, the Seneca bent forward and fastened his teeth in the fore-arm of an incautious guard. The blood spurted and the man yelped with pain. Ta-wan-ne-ars laughed.

"Unarmed and bound, yet I can hurt you," he cried. "Truly, you are women. The warriors of the Great League scorn you."

Strangely enough, they made no retaliation upon him; but, having securely fastened us to the stakes, withdrew and stood somewhat apart from the encompassing crowds.

The silence continued for more than an hour, when a lane was opened opposite to us and Murray and de Veulle sauntered forward.

"I trust you have fared well, Master Juggins—I beg pardon, Master Ormerod?" remarked Murray urbanely. "No discomforts? Enough to eat and sufficient attention?"

I profited by Ta-wan-ne-ars' example, and thrust for the one weak spot in the man's armor of egotism.

"You do proclaim yourself for what you are," I answered him steadily. "Sure, no man of breeding would descend to the depths you reach. I do assure you, fellow, if you ever return to civilization and attempt to mix with the gently bred, your plow-boy origin will out."

His face was suffused to a purple hue.

" 'Sdeath!" he rasped. "Sir, know you not I am of the

Murrays of Cobbielaw? I quarter my arms with the Kieths! I have a right to carry the Bleeding Heart on my shield! I——"

"No, no," I interrupted. " 'Tis easy for you to claim here in the wilderness, but the humblest cadet of the house of Douglas would disprove you. 'Tis the bleeding hearts of your enemies you bear. You tear them out like the savages and devour them to make medicine. You are a foul, cowardly half-breed, more red than white."

"I have the blood of kings in my veins!" he shouted in the words he had used on board ship.

I laughed in his face, and Ta-wan-ne-ars joined in. Murray stormed in vain. I heaped ridicule upon his claims until cynical amusement appeared in de Veulle's eyes, for the man's conceit was fantastic.

"My mother was a Home of——" he asserted finally.

"I dislike to speak ill of any woman," I cut him off; "and certes I could weep for the grief of her who conceived you, whatever she was. But I make no doubt she was some Huron squaw."

His face went dead white.

"I was pleaded with overlong to spare you," he said in accents so cold that the words fell like icicles breaking from the rocks. "I am glad I resisted."

"You were never tempted to yield," I assured him.

"I shall give orders now that your torments be the most ingenious our savages can devise," he returned.

"I doubt it not," I said.

"You will die in much agony," he continued placidly. "Nobody will ever know of your taunts. And I"—his vanity flared up again—"I shall die a marquis and a duke."

"And a convicted criminal," I added.

He murmured something to de Veulle and walked away, the savages moving from his path as if he were death in person, for indeed they feared him, more even than they

feared Black Robe and their own accursed priests. He was the master of all.

"So you are to be chief torturer, *monsieur le chevalier?*" I remarked to de Veulle.

"Even so," he agreed.

"There could not be a fitter," I said sympathetically.

"I thank you for your appreciation," he replied.

"Yes," I reflected aloud, "unless it be at small-swords or in fair fight with any weapon, you should make a fair executioner. 'Twas an excellent butcher was spoiled in the modeling of you."

But de Veulle refused to be annoyed.

"Keep up your spirits by all means," he said—and in sober truth, I talked as much for that as to plague my enemies. "You will need them anon. I have instructed the savages to give you the long torment. You will be still alive this time tomorrow. Think of it! Your Iroquois friend knows what that means—an eyeless, bloody wreck of a man, begging to be slain! Ah, well, you would blunder in my way."

"I thought it was Murray's way," I answered.

"'Tis all one. And after all, as you must know, Murray is no more than a pawn in our plans."

"He would enjoy hearing you say so."

"He never will—and you will not be able to tell him when next you see, or rather, hear him."

He beckoned to the Cahnuaga chief.

"Let loose your people," he ordered, and stepped back.

The Cahnuaga put his hand to his mouth, and the high-pitched, soaring notes of the war-whoop resounded through the air. And as if one directing center animated them all the thousands of savages closed in on us, yelling and shrieking, weapons menacing, feet pounding the measures of some clumsy dance.

They swirled round and round us, those who could get nearest dashing up to the stakes to mock at us or threaten us with words and weapons. Nobody touched us, but the

strain of constantly expecting physical assault was nerve-racking. Ta-wan-ne-ars smiled serenely at them all, and when he could make himself heard, returned their threats.

This continued for a long time. Twilight was at hand before they dropped back, and a select band of young warriors began to exhibit their skill with bow and arrow, knife and tomahawk. Arrows were shot between our arms and bodies; tomahawks hurtled into the posts beside our ears; knives were hurled from the far side of the open space, so closely aimed that their points shaved our naked ribs. Once in a while we were scratched; the handle of a tomahawk, poorly thrown, raised a bump on my forehead. And de Veulle, squatting on the ground with a knot of chiefs, applauded the show.

It went on and on. New forms of mental torture were constantly devised. Darkness closed down, and the fires beside the stakes were lighted. I was in a daze. I had ceased to feel fear or misgiving. I was conscious only of a great weariness and thirst. The clamor that dinned in my ears, the weapons that jarred the post at intervals, the wild figures that leaped in the firelight—all combined in a weird blur that gradually became a coherent picture as my mind recalled for the second time the dying words of the Cahnuaga in the glade by the Great Trail.

" 'Be sure that whatever you do you cannot equal the ingenuity of the Ga-go-sa.' "

Hark! What was that eery sound that stole through the shadows, a sliding, minor chant that wailed and died away?

But the picture went on shaping itself in my mind.

" 'I seem to see pictures in the firelight of a stake, and a building with a tower and a bell that rings, and many of the Ga-go-sa dance around you, and your pain is very great.' "

Yes, there was the picture: our stakes, side by side, two instead of one; the fires that roared and flamed, the figures that danced and yelled; and beyond, across the village, the tower with the "bell that rings," looming above the trees.

And as I looked, the sickle moon, silvery-bright and sharp as a sword, protruded its upper horn over the wooden tower.

Of a sudden I realized that the shouting had died down. The prancing figures were at rest. But into the circle of firelight swayed the hideous column of False Faces, their masks of monstrous birds and beasts and reptiles seeming alive with horrid purpose in the shifting gloom, their feet moving harmoniously in the hesitant step of the dance, their voices united in the monotonous music of their chant.

They strung a circle, as they had done the day before, and halted, heads wabbling this way and that. There was a brief pause, and I noticed de Veulle, risen to his feet and staring intently behind me, where the wall of pines made a perfect background for the spectacle. A sigh burst from the half-seen throngs of savages.

"Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta!"

I craned my neck, and as well as the thongs permitted me peered around the stake to which I was lashed. A white figure flitted from the protection of the trees and glided toward us. The False Faces started a queer, rhythmic air, accompanied by gently throbbing drums. The figure commenced to dance, arms wide, hair floating free. Besides me Ta-wan-ne-ars choked back a groan of hate and love and fought fruitlessly against the rawhide thongs.

'Twas Ga-ha-no. She danced forward, passing between our stakes and into the open arena which was delimited by the vague, crouching forms of the False Faces. She wore again her ceremonial uniform, the kilt and moccasins; but this time they were white, fashioned of skins taken from the bellies of young does. Her limbs and body, too, were coated with some white substance that made her gleam like a delicate marble statue when she postured in the flickering radiance of the fires. Her hair floated about her like a black mist, first concealing, then revealing, the perfect, swelling lines of her figure.

She tossed up her arms in a curving gesture toward the moon, riding low above the treetops. The music of the

attendant priests swung into a faster measure, the pulsing of the drums became subtly disturbing, commanding.

"O So-a-ka-ga-gwa," she cried, "I, your servant, the Mistress of the False Faces, begin now the Moon Feast we make in your honor!"

She resumed her dance, but 'twas very different from the graceful, pleasing steps she had first used. I know not how to describe it, save perhaps that 'twas like the music, provocative, appealing to the basest instincts in man, indecent with a peculiarly attractive indecency. It was, I think, the dance of creation, of the impulse of life, one of the oldest and in its perverted way one of the truest dances which man ever devised. It could only be danced by a savage people, primitive and unashamed.

You could feel its influence upon the bystanders, the thousands who stood or crouched or sat around the curve of the amphitheater beyond the lines of False Faces. You could feel their rising emotion; the instincts, normally half-tamed, that awakened in them; the cravings that slowly began to dominate them. You could hear the catching breaths, the yelps of satisfaction, the growing spirit of license, of utter savagery.

Faster went the measure of the dance. Faster whirled the glistening white figure. Her hair streamed behind her; her moccasins barely touched the ground; her body was contorted with supple precision.

Now she danced before us, her eyes burning with mockery—I know not what—of Ta-wan-ne-ars. Now she spun around the open space in a series of intricate steps and posturings.

The music worked up to a crescendo, the drums thudding with furious speed. Ga-ha-no leaped high in air and raised her arms toward the moon, whose sickle shape was no whiter or fairer than she.

The chant stopped in the middle of a note, and as her feet touched the ground again she ran lightly across the

amphitheater and threw herself into de Veulle's arms. He tossed her upon his shoulder.

"The Moon Feast is open, O my people," she called back as he disappeared with her into the shadows.

All those thousands of people went mad. The Dancing-Place became a wild tumult of naked savages, men and women, leaping in groups and couples to the renewed music of the False Faces. Decency and restraint were cast aside.

Tom and Bolling rolled in barrels of rum, which were opened and consumed as rapidly as the heads were knocked off; and the raw spirits combined with the hellish chant and the suggestive throbbing of the drums to stimulate afresh the passions which Ga-ha-no's dancing had aroused.[1]

At first they paid no attention to us. They were preoccupied with the extraordinary hysteria which had gripped them. They apostrophized the moon. The women flung themselves upon the False Faces, for it was deemed an honor to receive the attentions of these priests of evil. The men worked themselves into an excess of debauchery. Groups formed and dissolved with amazing rapidity. Individuals, wearying of each other, ran hither and thither, seeking partners who were more pleasing or attractive to them.

But at last a portion of the drunken mob turned upon us. An old woman with wispy gray hair and shrunken breasts beat Ta-wan-ne-ars on the flank with a smoldering brand. Bolling, whatever of man there was in him smothered under the brutishness the rum had excited, carefully inserted a pine-splinter in the quick of my fingernail. I gritted my teeth to force back the scream of agony, and managed to laugh—how, I do not know—when he set it alight.

"The brother of Ta-wan-ne-ars is a great warrior," proclaimed my comrade, swift to come to my help. "Red Jack and his friends can not hurt Ormerod. We laugh at you."

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[1] Decency forbids a detailed description of these horrible rites.—H. O.

Bolling ripped out his knife and staggered toward the Seneca's stake.

"I'll make you laugh," he spat wickedly. "I'll carve your mouth wider so you can laugh plenty when we begin on you in earnest. Think this has been anything? We——"

A yell of mingled fear and laughter interrupted him. False Faces and warriors, women as well as men, were pointing toward the background of the pines.

"Ne-e-ar-go-ye, the Bear, is come to play with us," they cried.

And others prostrated themselves and called—

"*Qua,* Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta!"

For the second time that night I twisted my neck to peer behind my stake, and sure the sight which met my eyes was weirder even than the white figure of the Moon Maiden. There within the circle of the firelight stood Ga-ha-no again. But 'twas a vastly different Ga-ha-no. On her head she wore a bear's mask, with the fur of the neck and shoulders falling around her body to the *ga-ka-ah* which draped her loins. In each hand she gripped a knife, and her white limbs staggered under her in pretense of the unsteady gait of a bear walking erect.

The False Faces began their chant, the drums rumbled crazily, and she wavered forward, arms flopping like paws, head poised absurdly upon one side. She pranced around the circle once, to the immense delight of the Indians, who hailed her with drunken laughter. Then she advanced upon us in the midst of a tense silence.

The fantastic figure followed an uncertain path, exactly as would a bear who was mistrustful of what he saw. The savages, keen to appreciate what they knew, applauded uproariously such faithfulness to nature.

They were equally enthusiastic when she advanced her muzzle suspiciously and smelled of my face. But they could not hear the familiar voice which whispered in my ear—

"Mr. Ormerod, when I have cut your bonds be ready to leap after me as soon as the Iroquois is free."

I started so that my surprize must have been apparent had it not been for the restraining rawhide thongs.

"What?" I gasped. "You!"

"Say nothing. Time is short. And I will——"

She danced, with her ridiculous gait, over to Ta-wan-ne-ars, and I watched curiously his look of affection and detestation change to one of quickly suppressed amazement. With his ready wit he shook his head at her and tried to bite one of the furry ears of her mask.

She backed away from us slowly, and her head balanced from side to side in contemplation. Then she charged upon me, knives flashing before my eyes. She slashed at me here and there, and each time she slashed she severed a thong. I pretended abject fear, and the befuddled savages shouted with glee.

She pranced to Ta-wan-ne-ars and performed the same operation upon him. He, too, gave evidence of fear. He cowered against the stake and lowered his head. But when she advanced her mask and nuzzled his shoulder, I saw his powerful muscles knotting themselves in preparation for the dash for freedom.

"Now!" I heard her say very low.

Ta-wan-ne-ars seemed to rise into the air, thongs flying behind him. I tugged and jumped and my own lashings parted—and I found myself running somewhat stiffly beside the Iroquois.

A second figure drew up to my side, and I felt a knife-hilt pushed into my hand.

"In case," said the familiar voice. "And here is one for the Iroquois, too."

I stared down in bewilderment at the bear-mask. 'Twas so unexpected, yet so obviously what I might have known she would do if the opportunity arose. That clean scorn, that brave honesty of purpose, I had marked in her, were

earnest of her determination to dare all for what she believed to be right.

A chorus of yelps like a wolf-pack in full cry split the night behind us. One of the False Faces sprang into our path, and Ta-wan-ne-ars closed with him. The Seneca's knife plunged into his throat, and he collapsed with a strangled scream.

As the pine-trees shrouded us I looked back over my shoulder. The Dancing-Place was covered with a mob of running figures who fell over each other in their drunken frenzy.

XX

THE ARGOSY OF FURS

"TO THE left," sobbed the voice from the bear's mask.

We turned between the trunks of the pines, the mat of fallen needles springy underfoot. Behind us the fires of the Dancing-Place were a faint radiance in the dusk. Branches crashed; bodies hurtled against each other; a bedlam of shrieks resounded to the skies.

"Let me help you," I panted to our rescuer.

"There will be no need," she answered, running stride for stride beside us.

"At the least, slip off your mask," urged Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"I shall be wanting it presently," she returned. "Do not be concerned for me. Many a mile I have run with the gillies over the Highland hills."

She stumbled as she spoke, and I set my hand under her elbow. Ta-wan-ne-ars did the same on the other side, and so we ran for a space, three and three, our bruised and rusty joints gradually limbering with the effort.

Presently we came to an opening amongst the pines, with a huge, flat rock in the center and before the rock the ashes of a fire. My foot struck something round, and a human skull, blackened and charred, bounded ahead of us. I felt a shudder pass through the slender figure in the mask.

" 'Tis the altar of the False Faces," she murmured. "If Père Hyacinthe only knew!"

"What dreadful——" I started to say.

"No, no," she said. "Do not be asking me. I can not

think of it without pain. But there is this to be thankful for: none but the Ga-go-sa will dare to follow us through the wood."

"Was that your thought?" I questioned.

"No. I was helpless. 'Twas the Mistress—she bade me call her Ga-ha-no—thought of everything."

Ta-wan-ne-ars stopped in his stride.

"What of Ga-ha-no?" he demanded sternly.

She glanced fearfully backward along the way we had come.

"We may not stay," she answered rapidly. "I will talk as we run. Oh, haste, haste, or all will be lost!"

The Seneca resumed his steady gait, but the moonlight filtering through the branches revealed the agony in his face, an agony which the ordeal at the stake had not been able to produce.

"Ga-ha-no thought of all," gasped our companion, her voice strangely muffled by the mask. "She came to me this morning—whilst I was pleading with them—told me how it might be done—fetched me here—procured me the mask and costume—taught me the dance. 'Twas she secured the delay—in your torture—made them send you food—bolstered your strength."

"Where is she now?" asked Ta-wan-ne-ars hardly.

She looked sidewise at him—I think in pity.

"With the Chevalier de Veulle," she said reluctantly.

Then with quick earnestness:

" 'Twas part of her plan. It might not—otherwise be done."

He was silent, and we ran on for as much as a quarter-hour, coming then to the bank of a small stream, where a trail marked a ford.

"Under those bushes," she said, pointing, "you will find your clothes and weapons. We hid them this evening."

I scurried into the undergrowth and started to don the tattered leather garments which were fastened in a bundle to the barrel of my musket—the musket that Juggins had

given to me, years and years ago, it seemed, in London, and which I had expected never to see again. But she halted me.

"No, no, Mr. Ormerod!" she exclaimed. "There is not time. You must go on alone, the two of you. They will expect you to strike into the Doom Trail. 'Tis the quickest way to the settlements. Ga-ha-no bade me tell you to go west instead, making for Oswego at the mouth of the Onondagas River. So you may shake off the pursuit of the Keepers."

"But you?" I cried, standing up, bundle and musket in hand.

" 'Tis my part to lead them into the Doom Trail."

Ta-wan-ne-ars joined with me in a violent protest. But she waved us aside.

"There is no other way."

"We can fight them off," I asserted.

"But I do not wish to leave," she said.

"What? You would stay here in this place of evil, knowing what goes on?"

"There is no other way," she repeated. "I will have learned much since my coming here, Master Ormerod, and amongst other things, to think the less harshly of you."

"For that I am thankful," I replied, "but sure, you must let us take you back to Fort Orange. Governor Burnet will care for you."

"It can not be," she insisted. "My place is here. Wicked as they be, these men here—and he who is called my father is not the cleanest of them—they work in a good cause. 'Tis for me to stay by and see they do what is expected of them for it."

"We will force you to come with us," I declared hotly.

She shook her cumbrous mask.

"You would not do so. Now be off, sir. The False Faces will be on us any moment—and I am not wishing to be caught by them, even though they would not venture to do me harm."

A burst of ferocious yelling came from the heart of the pine wood.

"They have seen traces of us in the open space by the altar," interpreted Ta-wan-ne-ars.

He swung musket and bundle to his shoulder, and faced the bear-mask, a splendid figure in bronze.

"Sister Ne-e-ar-go-ye," he said gravely, "did Ga-ha-no give you any message for Ta-wan-ne-ars?"

She hesitated.

"She said that if you asked for her I was to tell you to forget Ga-ha-no, that she was unworthy of your memory. But you were to believe that what she did for you tonight was in reparation for her first great wrong."

He bowed his head.

"And oh, Ta-wan-ne-ars," she went on impulsively, "she pays a bitter price. Forgive her."

Ta-wan-ne-ars looked up.

"Say this to Ga-ha-no," he answered. "Say Ta-wan-ne-ars thinks of her as a Lost Soul, tarrying for a while with Ata-ent-sic, and in the end he will come for her and bring her home again to his lodge. Say that Ta-wan-ne-ars never forgets."

He raised his right arm in the gesture of farewell, and stepped into the current of the stream.

"We part once more, Marjory," I said, offering my hand.

She took it.

"For certain words I have spoken to you, I am sorry," she said. "I know more now. You may be my enemy, but I believe you not to be a traitor."

"Thank you. And is that all you have to say to me?"

"That is all," she replied softly, withdrawing her hand.

"Do you take this knife, then," I said, sparring for time against my judgment and all expediency.

She refused it.

"If I am caught they will not harm me."

I shivered at thought of the hands of the brutal priests of So-a-ka-ga-gwa on her unsullied body.

"I will not leave you," I cried, and made to walk with her along the trail.

But she pushed me back.

"You will not be helping me by so acting," she insisted in her quaint Gaelic speech which had won me when I first heard it. "And—and some day I may need your help more than I do tonight."

"Will you call upon me then?"

"Yes."

The yelling of the False Faces burst forth much nearer in the wood.

"Please go, Master Ormerod," she begged. "If I am not overtaken, this mask will protect me as far as the chapel, where my own clothes are awaiting me. They dare not enter there."

I captured her hand again and carried it to my lips.

"My name is Harry," I answered. "And I have never forgotten the song in the cabin of the *New Venture*."

"Thank you, Harry," she returned with a trill of elfin laughter. "And I do assure you I know other songs."

With that she was gone. Yet I had a feeling I had never known before that she was still with me, and I stepped into the water with joy in my heart.

A score of paces down the bank I found Ta-wan-ne-ars, and we crouched under the pendant branches of a willow to see what would happen, muskets primed and ready.

The yelling in the wood increased in volume as the False Faces followed the course we had taken by broken branches and footprints in the pinemold. A misshapen figure with the head of some fabled beast squattered into the trail and galloped around, nose to ground like a hound seeking a lost scent. In a moment the ugly head was lifted, and a howl of satisfaction greeted the other monstrous shapes which joined it. The whole pack gave tongue and vanished up the trail after Marjory.

Ta-wan-ne-ars waited to give the stragglers time to

appear, then rose and led the way along the bed of the stream westward.

"Can you pick your path at night?" I inquired anxiously.

He pointed upward to a group of four stars that sparkled in the velvet blue of the Summer sky.

"So long as Gwe-o-ga-ah [1] shines Ta-wan-ne-ars can not be lost," he answered.

We walked in the water for more than a mile, when the stream turned to the north and we stepped out upon a rock and dressed. Afterward we caught the overhanging bough of a tree and swung ourselves on to dry ground above the bank, never leaving a trace of our course up to that time. From this point we traveled on through the forest, pursuing no settled path, but holding to the westward in the direction of Oswego on the shore of the Cadarakui Lake.

We did not stop until after midday. Ta-wan-ne-ars knocked over a wild turkey with his tomahawk, kindled a fire of dry sticks and broiled the juicy bird before the coals. He insisted that I should sleep first, promising to arouse me at the end of two hours—he reckoned time, I should explain, by the declension of the sun. But when he finally did arouse me the sun was close to setting, and I saw by the sunken look of his eyes that he had not slept during his watch.

"Why did you not wake me?" I asked angrily.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars had no wish for sleep," he returned.

"Nonsense," I retorted. "You can not go indefinitely without rest."

"I had my thoughts for company," he said simply. "They are not happy thoughts, brother. They would not let me sleep."

I was shaken by a profound revulsion of feeling. It came over me that I had never fully appreciated the extreme degree of the mental suffering to which he had been exposed.

"Your sorrow is great," I acknowledged, "but sure you know that she for whom you mourn——"

[1] The Loon.

"She is a sick soul," he said. "She has offended the Great Spirit, and he has permitted Ha-ne-go-ate-geh to cast his shadow over her. But some day she will have performed the penance Ha-wen-ne-yu asks of her, and in that day he will permit Ta-wan-ne-ars to reclaim her."

"I hope so," I replied, stunned by the amazing confidence in eternal justice, the Christian charity, of this man who was, properly speaking, a lettered savage.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars knows it," he asserted confidently. "But I can not help thinking of the wickedness of my enemy."

His hand flew to his knife-hilt.

"I am confident of what will come, but I sorrow over what has been and is."

"I wish I had not spared him when his life was in my hand," I cried.

"My brother did not know," answered Ta-wan-ne-ars. "And already then the harm was done, the evil was sowed, the soul was corrupted."

He smiled gravely.

"Your search is ended, brother," he added.

"What do you mean?"

"The soul you sought has been found. It is no longer sick."

"Mayhap," I agreed, "but none the less 'tis out of reach and in great danger."

"We shall save it," he encouraged me. "Ta-wan-ne-ars knows. We must wait. The time will come."

He refused again to sleep, and we ate the remainder of the turkey—our hunger was prodigious—and pushed on, traveling most of the night. Not once did we see a trace of the Keepers, and when we halted Ta-wan-ne-ars said that we were on the marches of the hunting-grounds of the Mohawks. We slept together the remainder of that night, without a fire and on the top of a steep rock which was set with boulders which the foot of any climber must set in motion.

In the late morning we killed a rabbit, broiled and ate it and tramped the virgin forest until long past sunset. That day we ventured to discharge our firearms, and to my vast pride I killed a small deer. The following afternoon we caught our first view of the inland sea from a height of land, and the next morning we sighted the stockade of Oswego, the fort which Governor Burnet had established on the shores of the lake in his effort to divert the far-western fur-trade from the French posts.

The gate was closed, but as we approached it opened, and an enormous, pot-bellied figure in buckskin and fur cap sauntered out to meet us.

"*Ja,* idt is you," Corlaer hailed us. "I knew that Joncaire was oop to another of his tricks."

"What do you mean?" I asked as he turned to walk back beside us, his fat face as solemn as ever.

"I hafe hadt a scare," he said. "I came back to De-o-nun-da-ga-a from a hundting-party to find a Tahsagrondie messenger from Joncaire who says he is to tell me you fooled der Gofernor of Jagara, but now you are caught andt hafe gone to La Vierge du Bois. Andt der Tahsagrondie says Joncaire is sorry. Ha, ha! I thought it was a funny message."

"Funny mayhap," I replied feelingly. "But 'twas amazingly true."

Ta-wan-ne-ars nodded confirmation, and for an instant I thought Corlaer was going to betray surprize. But he shut his gaping mouth with resolution.

"What has happened?" he demanded. "I hafe come here to scout der Doom Trail andt learn how you diedt—andt you are alife."

So we told him, whilst the lieutenant in command of the post and his garrison of twenty lusty frontiersmen gathered in a knot to listen over each other's shoulders.

"Budt—budt," expostulated Peter, "you hafe been in La Vierge du Bois!"

"True."

"Budt nobody has efer been in La Vierge du Bois——"

"And come out alive," I amended. "I fear many poor souls have been sacrificed by those fiendish priests."

"Andt you fooled Joncaire!" repeated Peter admiringly.

'Twas that indeed which pleased him most. He insisted upon our repeating the tale with all details, and I believe he would have required a third account had it not been for the interruption which came during the afternoon.

We were sitting in the commandant's quarters on the upper floor of the block-house when the sentries on the stockade announced a large fleet of canoes approaching from the west. The lieutenant promptly issued orders to get out the trade-goods, and prepared for an impressive reception of the savages, deeming them emissaries of some tribe come to exchange their fur-catch of the Winter.

But the leading canoes held on past the fort, and none of those which followed gave indication of intent to steer inshore.

"Hafe you a canoe?" asked Corlaer of the bewildered lieutenant. "*Ja?* Well, my friendts andt I will go andt ask what this means."

We launched the canoe from the water-gate, and with Peter and Ta-wan-ne-ars at the paddles, sped out into the lake. Some distance from shore we overhauled the rear squadron of the fleet, every canoe loaded deep with packages of furs.

"Ho, brothers," called Ta-wan-ne-ars. "Who are you?"

The nearest canoe hove to.

"We are Necariagues," answered a paddler. "In front of us are Ottawas and Missisakies."

"The Chief of the English fort, who commands here in the name of Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, invites you to come ashore and trade with him."

Up stood a large, stout man with lanky black hair, dressed in the uniform of the French marine troops, who had been ensconced behind a bale of furs.

"Ha, 'tis my friend from Arles," he shouted, "and his

companion, the noble warchief! So the Keepers did not keep you?"

"No, Monsieur de Joncaire," I replied. "We are still alive to plague you."

"*Ventre St. Remi,* 'tis not sorry I am! Try it again, my lad. Only try it again!"

"And what are you doing with these people?"

He roared with laughter.

"No more than shepherding them past the temptations of the English."

Ta-wan-ne-ars called again to the Indians in the canoes.

"Come ashore, brothers. We have rich goods to trade with you."

"We do not need to trade with the English," replied the Necariague who had spoken before. "We are glad we can trade with our fathers, the French. They have plenty of goods to offer us. Onontio has sent word he will pay better than the English now."

"Ha, ha, ha" exploded Joncaire. "Ho, ho, ho! *Mort de ma vie! Tonerr-rr-re de Dieu!* 'Tis an odd world! The boot is on the other leg, Monsieur l'Arlesien!

"Present my compliments to Monsieur Burnet, Peter Corlaer. You may tell him I am not so discouraged as I once was. No, no, many things have happened.

"*Au revoir*—and avoid the Keepers. Avoid the keepers by all means. I am told they keep a strict watch upon the Doom Trail these days."

His paddlers dipped their blades, and his bellows of laughter were wafted back to us as his canoe followed the fur argosy down the lake toward the French posts on the St. Lawrence—posts whose magazines were already beginning to swell with the life-blood of English trade which was pouring over the Doom Trail.

XXI

A SCOUT OF THREE

"WE MUST scout the Doom Trail," I said as we carried the canoe through the water-gate and deposited it within the stockade. "I will write the governor at once of affairs at Jagara and La Vierge du Bois. But this last business makes it necessary he should have sure intelligence of what passes to Canada."

"*Ja,*" agreed Corlaer slowly. "Budt I hafe another scheme we might try first—tonight."

"What?"

He surveyed the scores of dwindling canoes, their silvery birchen sides agleam in the sunlight, their dripping paddle-blades shining as the paddlers drove them along.

"They will make camp by sunset at der point of der three rocks. Am I right, Ta-wan-ne-ars?"

The Seneca assented.

"That is eight—ten—miles from here. *Ja,* we can make it."

"Make what?" I asked impatiently.

"Der distance. Andt my plan."

"What plan, man?"

"To put der grin on der other side of Joncaire's face, by——! Now you listen."

And he outlined an undertaking which seemed absurdly simple until I chanced to look up and see that fleet of canoes clouding the eastern horizon of the lake.

"They are too many for us," I objected.

"*Ja,* if they know we come," he admitted. "Budt they do not. Andt I hafe seen brandy-kegs in among der furs."

"It is well worth trying," said Ta-wan-ne-ars deliberately. "If it succeeds it will set back the plans of Onontio and Murray."

"Andt if it does not, then you tell der Gofernor Peter Corlaer tried once too often to get der joke back on Joncaire."

With which sage comment, Peter took himself off to arrange with the post commandant for drawing certain supplies we should require for this new expedition.

Two hours later an express left Oswego with dispatches for Governor Burnet, describing the situation at Jagara and our experiences at La Vierge du Bois, as well as the passage of Joncaire's argosy of furs, the greatest haul which had so far been made by either country that year on the frontier. Before the gate was slammed shut again we three slipped out and waved good-by to the garrison on the walls.

We traveled parallel with the shore of the lake and made no effort to set a fast pace. Ta-wan-ne-ars and I were still tired from our exertions in escaping the hellish abode of the False Faces. We were glad to halt when we glimpsed the glow of fires on the beach ahead of us.

From this point our advance was more cautious, and we parted company with Corlaer in some bushes, whence we could distinguish figures dancing around the flames and hear the distant yells of the guests of Joncaire as they caroused on his thoughtful provision of brandy. The Dutchman stripped to his belt. Ta-wan-ne-ars relieved him of his musket, powder-horn and bullet-pouch, and I shouldered his clothes and pack.

"By der blasted pine—a goodt mile beyondt der other side," whispered Peter as he waded into the water.

"You are sure you can stay afloat so long?" I asked with some misgiving.

"*Ja,*" he said scornfully. "When you hear a noise like a fish rising three times, that is Peter."

He settled knife and tomahawk against either thigh, slung a spare flask of powder beside them, sank forward to his chin and began to cleave the water with powerful, overhand strokes.

"A merry evening to you," I called gently.

A grunt was my answer.

"We must hurry, brother," admonished Ta-wan-ne-ars.

He started off at right angles with the path we had been following, and we fetched a circle around the group of fires, coming ultimately to a high point above the shore half a mile beyond them. Here we rested, both because our weariness was very great and because we desired to witness Peter's exploit, and, if need be, be prepared to aid him.

It was past midnight, and the fires had burned low and the brandy-drinkers soaked themselves stupid. Not a sound came to us, except for the calling of a wolf from the heavy timber inshore and the croaking of water-birds.

'Twas Ta-wan-ne-ars' eagle vision which saw the danger-signal. He gripped my arm.

"Look, brother," he hissed.

I looked, and a flame spurted upward between the fires and the water. There was a sharp explosion. A long minute elapsed, and then a chorus of excited yells rose, dropped and was sustained.

The flame mounted higher, and we could see figures running this way and that in confusion. A musket barked. Others echoed it.

"They saw him in the water," remarked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"Do you think he escaped?" I asked.

"We should hear the scalp-yell if he was taken or killed. Hark! They still babble like animals."

We listened for ten minutes, and whilst the yelling continued, with intermittent shooting, there was nothing to indicate triumph or satisfaction. In the meantime the flames which Peter had kindled, after flourishing grandly,

gradually died out as the awakened savages removed those canoes which had not caught fire and threw water on such as were only smoldering.

We waited another five minutes to make sure the search did not trend in our direction, but the bewildered tools of Joncaire were convinced the attack had come from Oswego and the shouting and firing shifted away from us toward the fort. So we picked up our burdens and descended between boulders and stunted trees to a little bay which was marked by the shattered stump of a pine.

Half an hour passed uneventfully. Then the steady lapping of the water against the beach was disturbed by the splash a fish makes in rising. It was repeated twice. Ta-wan-ne-ars leaned over and splashed the water thrice with his hand. A grunt boomed out of the darkness. Ripples spread in a widening circle, and a huge form stepped noiselessly ashore, ignoring our helping hands.

"Oof, that was a goodt joke on Joncaire," muttered Peter. "Some canoes I smash with der ax andt some I blow up with der powder andt more are burnedt. Where are my clothes? I am soaked like der muskrat. *Ja,* when we get to der woods I findt me a bear and gife myself a rub with grease. I hafe bubbles under my skin."

"You were long in coming," said Ta-wan-ne-ars. "My brother is not hurt?"

"*Nein, nein.* Those drunken swine couldt not hit me. I swam far oudt andt at der first up der lake to fool them. Then I turned andt swam back under der water. Ooof, what a swim! I tell you I hafe bubbles under my skin! *Ja!*"

"Did you damage them much?" I asked eagerly.

Peter suspended the operation of struggling into his shirt and chuckled shrilly.

"I wouldt gife much to see der face of that Joncaire when he counts his canoes andt der fur-packs he has left. Twice now we get der joke on him."

Wet as he was, with the water dripping from his lank

hair, he insisted upon quitting that dangerous locality at once. We tramped across country until the sun was high, and we stumbled upon an isolated family of Onondagas, who made us free of their *ga-no-sote.* They relieved Peter's principal want by furnishing him bear's grease, with which he anointed himself vigorously before sleeping.

We spent two days with these people, recuperating in preparation for the stern task ahead of us. After parting with them we continued in leisurely fashion eastward, keeping well to the north of the Great Trail of the Long House and avoiding as much as possible contact with the Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks whose countries we traversed. Some ten days after leaving Oswego we found ourselves on the verge of that untracked domain which was roamed by the Keepers of the Doom Trail.

Here we paused to take counsel with one another.

"Somewhere this side of the Mohawk the Trail begins," said Ta-wan-ne-ars. "Shall we follow the river and scout for signs there?"

" 'Tis there the Keepers must be most vigilant," I suggested.

"*Ja,*" spoke up Peter, "andt if we do not come to harm, yet Murray will know we watch."

"What then?" asked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"Let us scout der country well back from der river. You know aboudt where lies La Vierge du Bois. It shouldt not be difficult to strike der line of der Trail."

This plan we agreed upon, and, so that we might not be constrained to use our muskets in the forbidden territory, we obtained from a Mohawk village a quantity of jerked meat and parched corn mixed with maple sugar ample to sustain us for a week or more. And in order to assure that our departure would be free from the observation of spies we left our last camp after dark and in two parties, Ta-wan-ne-ars and myself going in one direction and Peter in another.

Our meeting-place was a grove on the bank of a creek,

one of the tributaries of the Mohawk. We reached it without observation, and lay in concealment most of the day, starting again in the late afternoon and moving warily through the forest, following no particular course, but addressing ourselves rather to the effacement of all evidence of our passage.

We discovered nothing, and the next day and many others went by with no better luck. Sometimes we encountered the slots of deer or bear, and the woodcraft of my comrades would be baffled temporarily until they had proved beyond doubt that the trace was not used by human feet. Once we came upon signs of old encampments, and diligently scouted the vicinity, only to be convinced they were the relics of some casual hunting-party.

Our provisions were exhausted, and we were compelled to live from hand to mouth upon such game as Ta-wan-ne-ars could snare or kill with his tomahawk—and certes he was wondrous proficient in both arts. But we kept on, bearing always eastward and quartering the country in every direction. Game there was in plenty, sure testimony that man seldom came here; dense underbrush linked the towering trunks; there was not so much as a footprint in hundreds of square miles to reveal human occupancy.

Yet in the very midst of this deserted wilderness we came upon what we sought. We had abandoned the headwaters of the Mohawk and were following one of its middle branches, a shallow stream with pebbly, shelving banks, wading close inshore so as not to disturb the close-growing shrubbery. We all saw it simultaneously—a tattered, weather-stained fragment of canvas, caught on a snag in the current. I fished it out with my musket-barrel.

"A pack-cofer," declared Peter immediately.

"And safely identified," I added, putting my finger on an unmistakable thistle in green paint with three-quarters of a letter "M" above it.

A mile farther on Ta-wan-ne-ars exclaimed and pointed upward to the trunk of a tall elm. Partly shaded by the

foliage of the lower boughs a deep blaze was revealed in the bark.

We waded ashore and investigated. The underbrush was as thick as elsewhere, but presently Peter gave a heave with his bull-like shoulders and a whole section of growths, which had been laced together with vines on a backing of boughs, lifted gate-fashion. Beyond stretched a narrow alley, whose carpet of grass showed it to be seldom traveled.

"If this be not the Doom Trail 'tis worth a look none the less," I whispered.

Peter nodded, and slipped through the opening. I followed him, and Ta-wan-ne-ars brought up the rear.

Here in this hidden path the forest noises became remote. Even the birds ceased to twitter overhead, and the slightest stirring of the treetops made us drop to earth in expectancy of attack. Yet when the attack came we were taken completely by surprize.

We had progressed some five miles from the beginning of the trail, and had reached a point where it forked—or perhaps I should say was joined by a second trail. At any rate the united trails continued into a beaver swamp, where they disappeared. We scouted the swamp, but could see no signs of a path across it; and Peter led the way to the right, intending to encircle it.

The beavers had thinned the timber hereabout and cut down most of the brushwood, so that we walked at ease between wide-spaced trunks. We were all of us alert, but the first warning that we were under observation was a green-feathered arrow which sang between Peter and me and buried its head in the ground.

"Don'dt fire, whatefer you do," muttered Peter as he threw himself behind the nearest trunk.

Ta-wan-ne-ars and I copied his example. I found myself on the right of the three. The others had selected standing trunks. I had chosen, perforce, a fallen giant which some forest wind had overthrown. I crawled along the trunk into the tangle of roots, and from there gained a clump of

bushes growing about the hole from which it had been torn. I could see Ta-wan-ne-ars crouched behind his trunk, with his musket beside him and his tomahawk in his hand. Peter was concealed from view.

The green-feathered arrow had ceased quivering and I idly followed the angle of its inclination. My eyes traveled forward—and focused upon a hideous painted face which peered from a screen of sumac.

The watcher motioned behind him, and a second painted visage glided to his side. Ta-wan-ne-ars, seeking to draw their fire, thrust out the end of his scalp-lock, and the first watcher instantly drew bow and sent an arrow that grazed the trunk.

Nothing happened for a while. The Keepers waited, and Ta-wan-ne-ars and Peter remained under cover. I surveyed the situation. From the hole in which I lay a depression of the ground ran eastward past the lair of the Cahnuagas in the sumac clump. I started to crawl up it, dragging my musket after me, but before I had gone a dozen feet I was obliged to abandon the gun in order to insure that my progress should be silent.

Ta-wan-ne-ars, aware that I was up to something, called to Peter, and the two of them executed a series of feints which kept the Keepers occupied. When I was parallel with the sumac clump I sought shelter under a patch of wild blackberry-bushes. Cautiously parting my screen—which was exceedingly thorny and painful—I was able to view the Keepers from the rear. They were ensconced in what was evidently a permanent sentry-post. Beyond the sumacs was a low bark hut masked with boughs. At their feet were muskets. The bows they held were employed for the purpose of adding mystery to their attack.

So accustomed were the Keepers to the overpowering spell of the Doom Trail, which weakened the nerves of all trespassers, that they were wholly confident of the success of their tactics in first frightening us and afterward running us down at pleasure. They stood behind the sumac

screen, their bushy feather head-dresses close together, grins of anticipation cracking the paint on their evil faces.

I worked myself a little more in rear of their position, then rose quietly and drew knife and tomahawk. I was an amateur at casting the ax, but this was no time for hesitation. I flung it with all my might, and yelled the nearest approach I could compass to the war-whoop.

The tomahawk struck one of the Keepers with the flat of its blade, felling him. The other savage turned quickly and loosed his arrow at me, aiming wide in his confusion. He stooped for his musket, but I was on him with my knife and he was forced to leap back and meet me on even terms. Ta-wan-ne-ars and Peter came running between the trees, whooping encouragement.

They arrived in the nick of time, for the Cahnuaga I had tried to tomahawk was on his feet, ready to shoot me as I dodged the knife-blade of his mate. The Seneca brained this man with the butt of his gun, and Peter methodically tripped my adversary and helped me pinion him.

Ta-wan-ne-ars paused long enough to remove what was left of the scalp of his victim, then crossed to us and set his bloody knife to the throat of the survivor.

"Is it to be torture or a quick death, Cahnuaga dog!" he demanded.

The red eyes of the Keeper glared at him. "Death," the man spat, and strove to gnaw at the hands which held him.

"Then speak truly. Who travels Doom Trail today?"

"Nobody. We watch always."

Ta-wan-ne-ars pricked him slightly.

"You watch always," assented the Seneca. "Yes. And who comes?"

A shout echoed through the forest aisles. The red eyes of the Cahnuaga flared exultantly. His mouth opened.

"Yaaa-aaaa-aaa-ah—"

Ta-wan-ne-ars drove his point home, and the scream ended in an awful bubbling gasp.

The shout was repeated.

XXII

WE MEET RED DEATH AND BLACK DEATH

THE crashing of branches sounded as some heavy body ran along the Doom Trail.

"Did ye hear that screech?" shouted a rough voice.

"Yaas, Red, me hear him. He bery much like feller feel somet'ing he not like."

Peter nudged me, and Ta-wan-ne-ars seized the bow and quiver of one of the dead Keepers. We crouched beside the bodies behind the sumac screen. My gun was still where I had left it in the gully by which I had approached the lair of the watchers. In its stead I selected the musket of the man the Seneca had just knifed.

"Funny they don't answer us— 'nless that was an answer we heard," continued the rough voice. "Give 'em another hail in their own lingo."

A third voice was raised—in the Cahnuaga dialect, which was a corruption of the Iroquois speech and perfectly understandable to my comrades.

"*Qua,* O Keepers who watch," shouted the third speaker. "We acquaint you that we approach. We have with us the Red One and the Black One."

We remained quiet, but Peter possessed himself of the gun of the second Cahnuaga and placed it where he could reach it as soon as his own piece was discharged.

"That's —— funny, Tom," called the first speaker, who was plainly Bolling.

"Yaas, him —— —— funny," answered the negro.

They were approaching over the trail which forked into the one we had followed from the stream with the pebbly

banks. And at this point apparently they came to the junction of the two branches.

"Hullo," commented Bolling's great voice—he spoke habitually in a roar. "Somebody come by this way."

"Mebbe them Keepers go look for us the other way," suggested Tom.

"Mought be so, but I ain't figgerin' on takin' no chances with them green arrows. French put the Injuns up to dippin' the points in rattlesnake p'ison, and I seed them try it on a poor devil of a Mohican they gathered in. I ain't hankerin' to die in no snake-snarl."

The Indian who had shouted before repeated his hail.

"Them Keepers done gone away, Red," declared Tom. "Mebbe some Maquas[1] come dis way. The Keepers chase 'em out o' hyuh."

"——! I'm agoin' to find out," returned Bolling.

He trotted out of the mouth of the trail into the open space on the brink of the muskrat swamp.

"Nobody here," he called back after a casual look around. "Guess you was right, Tom. The Keepers got after somebody—or else the lazy dogs have turned in for a sleep. I'll find out later for sure. Now you rustle them packs up, and I'll get the dugout ready."

He dragged a canoe hollowed from a tree-trunk from its hiding-place in a bed of reeds, and produced two paddles from the prostrate trunk of a hollow tree. But we paid scant attention to him. Our eyes were fastened upon the odd procession which emerged from the trail in obedience to his summons.

First walked the negro Tom, a huge pack bowing his enormous shoulders. After the negro, in single file, came eight Cahnuagas, each with a large pack braced on a *ga-ne-ko-na-ah,* or burden frame. They carried their muskets in their hands.

"We've got to hurry if we're goin' to get everything

[1] Hostile term for Mohawks.

ferried over the swamp tonight," grumbled Bolling. "Waall, what's bitin' you?"

This question was addressed to a Cahnuaga who, in unslinging his burden-frame, had chanced to see the arrow in the ground which the Keepers had shot in their first attempt to bait us.

The Cahnuaga pointed silently to the green-feathered shaft.

"By ——!" swore Bolling with a start. "D'ye see that, Tom?"

The negro dropped his pack and shook some fresh priming into the pan of his musket.

"Nobody nebber done come here befo'," he said dubiously. "Howcome dat arrow dere, Red?"

"—— it, how the —— do I know? I want to tell you this ain't no joke. Something's happened here."

Bolling glanced about him uneasily.

"The Keepers have gone, that's sure," he announced. "What most likely happened was some party broke in here, and the Keepers chased 'em."

He chuckled wickedly.

"Ain't no blood nor nothin' around, so it 'pears likely the Keepers got the jump on 'em."

Ta-wan-ne-ars, who had been occupied in extracting arrows from a quiver and setting them in a row before him with points lightly thrust into the ground, now notched a shaft.

"Shall we begin, brothers?" he whispered. "Hold your fire until I run out of arrows."

"Ja," agreed Peter. "Budt do not shoot Red Jack or der nigger. We will safe them if we can."

"You can take on the negro," I spoke up. "Leave Bolling to me."

Peter looked doubtful.

"He is a goodt knife-fighter," he commenced to argue; but Ta-wan-ne-ars chose that moment to open his bombardment, and the Dutchman's remonstrance went for naught.

A green arrow streaked across the grove and buried its barbed bone head in the chest of one of the Cahnuagas. The man shrieked and tore at the shaft with his hands. His companions scattered right and left. But Ta-wan-ne-ars gave them no respite. His shafts filled the air. The green arrows drove into the packs, quivered in tree-trunks, pierced another unfortunate.

"Are ye crazy?" shouted Bolling at the strangely hostile sumac clump. "Don't ye see——"

"It's dem —— False Faces," cried Tom, dancing with rage. "Dey got some hocus-pocus up. Fire at 'em."

Thus adjured, the Cahnuagas let off a ragged volley which whistled over our heads. Ta-wan-ne-ars discharged the last of his arrows and reached for his musket. At the same moment Peter fired, and I tailed him. We saw two of the Indians collapse. Peter caught up his second musket and he and Ta-wan-ne-ars shot again. 'Twas impossible to miss. Besides Bolling and Tom, only two of the enemy were left.

"Knife and hatchet for the rest," said Ta-wan-ne-ars grimly. "Are my brothers ready?"

Peter answered him with the Iroquois war-whoop, and we sprang from the sumac clump, dodging right and left through the tree-trunks.

"Here they come," yelled Bolling in warning.

He fired his musket, and I felt the wind of its bullet on my cheek. Tom shot with no better results. The two surviving Cahnuagas threw away their guns and fled.

"I will take care of them, brothers," shouted Ta-wan-ne-ars, casting aside his own musket. "One Seneca against two Cahnuagas—that should be fair odds."

He put on speed as he spoke, waved his hand and was gone, running like a greyhound after the two frightened savages, who were scurrying around the swamp.

The field was left to Peter and me and the two ruffians whom the frontier called Red Death and Black Death. They seemed nothing loath to meet us.

"Ho, ho, ho," roared Bolling. "D'ye see who it is, Tom?"

The negro's apelike face was distorted by a grin which showed his yellow tusks. His wicked little eyes gleamed ferociously.

"Massa Murray done goin' to gib us a heap o' presents fo' this," he answered. "Ah reckon mebbe we get all der rum we wants to drink."

"Waall, I will," chuckled Bolling, "but you won't."

Tom slobbered like an animal regretting its inability to eat sufficiently.

"Ah'm aimin' to try," he said.

"There ain't enough," returned Bolling. "Waall, young feller"—this to me—"was you intendin' to amuse me some?"

"I'm intending to let a little clean air into your dirty skin," I answered.

He threw back his head as if much amused.

"Ho, ho, ho! Now ain't you got the smart way o' puttin' things? Young feller, I'll tell yer what: you're too good for the frontier. You——"

As quick as lightning, and without an indication in advance to warn me, he flung his tomahawk at my head. I saw it coming, and instinctively did the only thing possible to save myself—raised my own ax to guard. Bolling's hatchet struck mine and knocked it from my hand, leaving my arm sore and tingling.

"You wasn't expectin' that, was you?" he gibed. "Waall, young feller, there's a heap o' other things you ain't expectin', but they're a-goin' to happen. Yes, right now. You watch."

He poised himself on the balls of his feet, and pranced around me, his big, double-edged scalping-knife held ready in his right hand.

"I'm aimin' to carve you, my lad," he warned me. "You ain't got the chance a squirrel has ag'in an eagle.

There ain't a knife-fighter in these parts can stand up to me. D'ye know what they call me?"

"The Red Death," I said. "And I am going to redden more than your hair."

"Ho, ho, ho! The cockerel can crow! Boy, I'm 'most ready to be sorry for ye. I feel that bloody-minded I ain't got no mercy left at all.

"It ain't just that I'm a-goin' to kill ye, ye understand. That wouldn't be so bad. But no, I'm goin' to take my time about it and carve ye up first—bit by bit. I'll take a little offen your arm first. Like that!"

He made a sudden leap, but I had been watching his eye, as the fencing-masters taught us to watch an opponent with the small-swords—and knife-fighting is much like sword-play in this respect—and I was prepared for him. I jumped backward, and his knife-point jabbed the sod underfoot. He was on his feet again in a second.

"Thought ye was smart, eh?" he snarled, his ugly face a blaze of ferocity. "Waall, for that, I'll torment ye the longer. Take this now!"

He attacked me with a peculiar sweeping blow that was aimed at my shoulder, but fell at the level of the waist. Had it passed my guard, 'twould have disemboweled me. I parried his blade with mine, and struck back for the first time with such venom that he leaped away in alarm.

The suspension in his attack gave me opportunity to glance over my shoulder toward the edge of the swamp, where Peter and the negro were circling each other warily, tomahawks poised for throwing.

The sight put an idea in my mind. I remembered my duel with the Cahnuaga in the glade by the Great Trail and the discovery that he was at a disadvantage when I used the knife as I had learned to use the sword. I promptly shifted my grip on the knife-hilt and held it straight before me as if it were a rapier. At the same time I inclined my other arm behind me to balance it. Bolling viewed this manoeuvre with derision.

"Ye pore babby," he sneered. "Think ye can meet a knife-fighter like me with one arm? Or fight me off with the point? I'll show ye."

He charged upon me like a battering-ram, his knife a whirling point of steel, its broad blade slashing in both directions. I retired slowly, anxious to increase his self-confidence.

"Stand up to me!" he yelled finally. "Be ye feared?"

I laughed at this, and it made him furious. He stamped around me, slashing and stabbing, and it was several minutes before he discovered that however viciously he struck I was always able to parry him with an economy of effort. I kept my point in the restricted circle which the experts of fence decree to be the most potent guard.

Breathing heavily, he retreated several paces and stood, glaring at me, his knife upraised.

"You don't understand, Bolling, do you?" I mocked him.

"Understand what, ye —— —— swine?" he ripped.

"Fighting the way gentlemen fight."

"Ye call that a gentleman's way!" he laughed harshly. "I call it a coward's way! Why don't ye take the edge?"

"I will if you'll take the point," I retorted.

"Come on," he proffered, and he crept forward like a huge cat, feet spread wide, shoulders crouched, knife a menacing flame.

Somewhat to his surprize I did not give ground to him this time, but met him squarely as he advanced. My arm was extended, full-length, tipped with a good ten inches of steel. He struck, and I parried his blow. He slashed, and I put it aside. He struck again, and I almost succeeded in twisting his blade from his hand by an old trick of the *salle des armes*. But my knife was not long enough to get the necessary purchase with it.

"Why don't ye fight fair?" he growled, wringing his arm.

"Why don't you?" I returned.

He charged with wonderful celerity, dropped to his knee

and slashed upward so effectively that his point cut the skirt of my leather shirt.

"I'll get ye yet," he howled with glee.

But I refuse to be intimidated. Indeed, I was no longer doubtful of the issue. I knew that I could outfight him or any fighter of his caliber by my adaptation of sword-play to knife-fighting.

I leaped upon him by way of answer, and pressed the fighting. He yielded ground to me, seeking to retreat into the woods by the trail; but I rounded him up and herded him steadily toward the edge of the swamp.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Peter fling his tomahawk at Tom and Tom hurl his knife in reply. Then my opponent shifted ground once more, and I was occupied in driving him back in the direction I meant him to go. We hovered nearer and nearer to the swamp edge, and Bolling's breath began to come in labored gasps.

I shortened our fighting-range, and gave him the point, drawing blood occasionally. He kept his head down, and parried desperately, trying to escape to one side, but I was on him so swiftly that he was afraid of a blow from the rear, and must needs stand to defend himself. At last he stood on the very brink of the morass, with no avenue of escape open.

I paused a moment.

"How will you die, my friend?" I asked. "You can smother to death if you prefer it."

His answer was a bellow of insensate rage and his knife, thrown point-first at my chest. By sheer luck I caught its point on my hilt, turned it aside and met his rush. He wrapped his arms around me, intent on carrying me with him into the ooze and slime. But I stabbed him to the heart before his bear's hug was completed, and he fell away from me, arms spread wide, and lay in a noisome heap by the tussocks of marsh grass.

I stood over him, panting from my exertions, when a shout from Ta-wan-ne-ars attracted my attention. The

Seneca was returning from his pursuit of the two Cahnuagas. He shouted again, and pointed behind me. I turned to see Peter and the negro locked in each other's arms, and as I looked, Tom heaved Peter into the air and sought to throw him. But Peter locked his legs around the negro's waist, and they rolled over and over across the ground.

I reached them just as they struggled to their feet, grips unrelaxed. Peter warned me off.

"Standt clear," he croaked. "I finish this myself."

Certes, nobody but Peter could have finished it. The negro's strength was colossal. His arms were half again as long as Peter's and Peter was a big man. The negro's shoulder and back muscles were iron bands—we afterward estimated the pack he had been carrying at three hundred weight and a half. He fought like a wildcat, with teeth and nails and legs. But Peter met him phlegmatically, refusing to be angered by the vilest attempt.

Once, whilst Ta-wan-ne-ars and I stood by, Peter tried to break his back. Any other man's back would have been broken. A second time Tom rolled the Dutchman on the ground and clawed at his eyes; but Peter kept one arm across them and escaped with bleeding cheeks. Again, Peter rose up to his full height and jolted the negro down upon his head. It seemed as if the fellow's neck must break if his skull resisted the shock. Yet he bounded to his feet unhurt, and with a swift look around made a dash for liberty, which Ta-wan-ne-ars and I headed off.

Then Peter closed with him. They had torn the clothing from each other's shoulders and flanks. They dripped blood. Their skins shone with sweat. Their chests heaved with the effort for breath.

Tom stooped and flung his arms around Peter's waist, driving his head for the Dutchman's loins. Peter retaliated by bringing up his knee against the negro's chin. Tom reeled back, and Peter swooped upon him. One arm hooked Tom's waist, the other caught him by the neck.

Dazed and with a mouthful of shattered teeth, Tom struggled feebly, but without avail. Peter twisted him, bore him to the ground, shifted grip rapidly, drove his knee into the quivering belly and throttled the life out of the black throat.

"So I make an endt of him," panted the Dutchman as he staggered to his feet.

"Aye, we have made an end to Red Death and Black Death," I answered.

"And I slew the two who ran," added Ta-wan-ne-ars, touching two scalps whose clustered feathers protruded from his belt.

"A clean sweep," I said. "There will be none to carry the tale to La Vierge du Bois."

"That is ever the criminal's belief," interrupted a voice in French.

We spun round in amazement to face a gaunt figure in the black habit of the Jesuits.

"Black Robe!" exclaimed Peter.

Ta-wan-ne-ars glowered at the priest.

"What do you do here, Père Hyacinthe?" I asked in French.

"What is that to you?" he snapped. "I go about my Father's business; that is sufficient for the bloody-minded to know."

"If you will look at me closer, father, you will recognize my face," I answered. "Surely one has the right of vengeance upon those who would torture one."

He peered at me.

"You and the Indian were at La Vierge du Bois," he said. "Yes, I remember now. Did the light shine in your eyes, my son?"

"Not the light you mean, but I saw much evil which went on there behind your back."

"What?" he demanded.

I told him of the Moon Feast and the False Face rites and started to reveal the duplicity of de Veulle.

"Tell me no more," he interrupted with a sigh. "'Tis

already hard to bear these burdens my unworthy shoulders carry. I cry out now and again, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' But what bloody business have you done here? Are your skirts clear that you should assail the poor savages, who still relapse to superstition?"

"You say nothing of the Chevalier de Veulle," I commented.

"The man is your enemy," he returned shrewdly. "I do not think your judgment is unbiased."

Ta-wan-ne-ars raised his tomahawk, implacable hatred in his face.

"This man is leagued with the priests of evil," he said. "He is at one with Murray. Let us made an end of him."

Peter, methodically retrieving his clothing and equipment, grunted assent.

"No, no," I intervened. " 'Tis not fair to judge him by his associates. Let him go."

"He will only carry word of what has passed to Murray," objected Ta-wan-ne-ars.

I touched my forehead.

"He hath gone through the torture twice," I said. "I think the Great Spirit has set his seal upon him."

Ta-wan-ne-ars sheathed his ax. Peter, saturated as he was with Indian lore, nodded his head.

"Let him go," said the Dutchman curtly. "It don't matter if Murray knows we hafe found der trail. Sooner or later he hears of this killing anyhow."

I turned to the priest.

"You are free to go, father," I said.

He laughed mockingly.

"Yes, free, but I do not need your word for it. I go when the Word calls me, and I come when It calls me—and none stays me."

He raised a crucifix on high as he spoke. His eye chanced to fall upon the bodies scattered on the verge of the swamp.

"Do these poor souls require Christian burial?" he asked.

"They were devil-worshipers, father," I said.

He hesitated, then muttered several prayers in Latin and made the sign of the cross in the air. Without another word he turned on his heel and disappeared into the woods, following the route around the swamp which Ta-wan-ne-ars had taken.

XXIII

GOVERNOR BURNET IS DEFIED

'TWAS early Autumn when we returned to Albany. The leaves were coloring, and there was a nip of frost in the air. The flag over the battlements of Fort Orange stood out straight from its staff. The citizens who thronged the street leading up to the fort gate must needs hold on to their hat-brims.

"Are the streets usually so crowded?" I asked Peter.

He shook his head, and I accosted a tavernkeeper who stood in his doorway, regarding the passers-by with anticipation of the harvest he would reap later.

"'Tis his Excellency the governor," he explained. "Master Burnet is come up-river from New York town this morning."

"What is toward?"

"I know not, my master. The governor and Master Colden of his Council have summoned certain gentry and merchants and the officers of the troops to meet them in the Great Hall of the fort this afternoon."

I thanked him, and passed on.

"Here is great luck for us!" I exclaimed to Corlaer and Ta-wan-ne-ars. "We are saved the trip down-river."

"*Ja,*" grunted Peter.

Ta-wan-ne-ars smiled.

"Does my brother already surrender to the spell of the wilderness?" he inquired.

I started, for indeed the Seneca's uncanny inward vision had perceived the question I was then debating in my own mind.

"How knew you that?" I demanded as we shouldered our way through Dutch farmers and burghers, English settlers of the newly opened districts, slaves, patentees, patroons, Indians from the Lower Castle of the Mohawks, frontiersmen and soldiers.

His smile broadened.

"My brother was pleased to think that he need not go down-river."

" 'Tis true," I affirmed. "I have no wish to leave the forest. I find even this village overcrowded to suit me."

Whilst I pondered this we came to the fort gate and gave our names to the sentry who stopped all save the few the governor had summoned to attend upon him. A messenger he dispatched brought back word that we were to enter, and we were escorted across the parade and into the quarters of the commandant adjoining the Great Hall.

Master Colden met us in the doorway.

"Zooks, but I am right glad to see you," he cried. "And his Excellency is overjoyed. But I will leave it to him to express his satisfaction."

He opened an inner door and ushered us into the presence of the governor. Master Burnet rose from the chair in which he was sitting by a flat-topped table which served him for desk, and came forward with hand outstretched.

"Master Ormerod, this could not have been better! I wished above all things for speech with you. Corlaer, I am deeply in your debt. Ta-wan-ne-ars, you have again incurred the gratitude of the province. I shall not forget that you have imperiled your life in our cause."

"Did you receive my report from Oswego, sir?" I asked.

"Certes, 'twas that—and this"—he tapped a document which lay before him on the table—"which brought me here."

He proffered it. 'Twas a report from a secret agent at Montreal, quoting the decision of the French fur-dealers, acting in conjunction with their Government, to raise the price of beaver from two livres, or one shilling six pence in

English currency, the pound, to the level of four livres, or three shillings, the established price then prevailing at the English trading-posts.

"That, mind you," continued the governor as I returned the paper to him, "was the first reaction in Canada to the tidings that Murray had succeeded in legitimatizing his trade over the Doom Trail."

"We have found the Doom Trail, your Excellency," I said.

"You have done well," he applauded. "Aye, better than I expected of you in so short a time."

"We also slew——"

"I beg your Excellency's indulgence," interrupted Master Colden, "but the gentlemen you bade to meet you are now assembled in the Great Hall. Can not Master Ormerod's report await the conclusion of your interview with them?"

"That would be best," agreed the governor. "But I wish Master Ormerod and his companions to come with me. It may be I shall appeal to them for first-hand testimony."

We deposited our muskets in a corner of the room, and then filed behind Master Burnet and the surveyor-general into the larger chamber adjoining, where some thirty men awaited him. Several were gentry who were members of his Council. Three were officers in command of the frontier garrisons. The remainder were merchants, dealing to greater or lesser extent in the fur-trade, the great export staple of the province.

They rose when the governor entered and remained standing until he was seated. Master Colden found seats for Ta-wan-ne-ars, Peter and me to one side of the room, and we watched with interest the battle which began almost with his Excellency's first word.

He wasted no time in preliminaries or generalities. He deposited several papers on the table in front of him, and addressed himself to his task.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I have summoned you to meet

me here because a situation has arisen which is of the utmost gravity to the welfare of the province and the larger interests of his Majesty's realm. Recently I have been in receipt of a communication in the form of a petition signed by many of the chief merchants of the province, beseeching me to abandon my opposition to the retention of the free trade with Canada which is now temporarily secured to them by the action of the Lords of Trade in suspending decision upon the law prohibiting the trade in Indian goods which I secured to be passed last year."

"That petition represented the sober thought of a majority of the merchants and traders, your Excellency," spoke up a prosperous-looking man in the front row facing Master Burnet.

"It may be so," replied the governor. "But I would suggest to you, my friends, that certain knowledge hath come to me which compels me to wonder whether you would persist in this attitude were you acquainted with it. Briefly, I have lately obtained definite information that the French are beginning the erection of a stone fort at Jagara."

"There are many such reports in circulation," said another merchant, a hard-featured man with graying hair. "It seems to many of us, sir, that the fault is as much upon our side as upon that of the French. Why must we assail them if they seek to protect their interests?"

"I agree with the principle of what you say, sir," answered the governor patiently. "But in this case, permit me to point out that the territory this side of the Falls of Jagara is secured to us by the Peace of Utrecht. 'Tis not only that the French have no right to construct a fort there. They have no right to maintain a trading-post there.

"Yet my agent talked with the officers in charge, Monsieur de Joncaire and Monsieur de Lery, and they boasted of their intent to erect such a fort as would be a curb on our Indian allies, the Iroquois, and divert to their posts farther up the Cadarakui Lake the fur trade which now comes to us at Irondequoit and Oswego, Schenectady and Albany."

"Your Excellency is needlessly worried concerning the fur-trade," asserted the hard-featured merchant. "What matters it to us the way in which the furs come? They will go ultimately to the people paying the best prices for them, and those people are ourselves."

"I thank you for putting me in the way of bringing forward a most important point," returned the governor suavely. "At the time I received word of the building of the fort at Jagara, I received also this report from an agent in Montreal——"

"Why must we have spies?" interrupted a third merchant.

"To protect our just interests, sir," said the governor, and for the first time a hint of sternness rang in his voice. "This report announces the doubling of the price paid for beaver at the French posts, so that now they are on a par with us."

"We can afford to pay more than we do. London will still take it from us at a profit," rejoined the merchant who had first spoken.

"Aye, sirs," urged the governor; "but do you not see that presently, if things go on as they do, the French may increase their price again slowly, a few sous at a time, until they are frankly overbidding you?"

"We will chance that," spoke up several men.

"Trade is trade," cried another. "It goes where the money is."

"Aye, we have no fear," clamored others.

"And let us suppose," resumed the governor, "that the French permit you to draw supplies of furs through them. I can conceive they might do so if it netted them the prices they desire. Does that mean that you will always be safe in expecting to have your wants so filled?"

"To be sure," answered three or four men at once.

"I differ with you," replied Master Burnet. "The fur-trade is not only a means to earn profits. 'Tis a most important stake in securing military success. The nation

which controls the fur-trade, my masters, will have the interest of the larger numbers of savages. The nation which owns the support of the most Indian tribes will be the nation superior in extending its territories in time of peace and superior in battle in time of war."

"It ill becomes a plain merchant to take issue with your Excellency," remarked the hard-featured merchant. "And 'tis like to go against me if I do——"

"Speak with entire freedom, sir," interrupted Master Burnet.

"Then I must say, your Excellency, that it seems to me you attach overmuch importance to savage tribes and war. There is enough land in North America for French and English and Indians, too. But if you go around looking for attack, why, 'tis likely you will bring such a catastrophe upon yourself."

"Hear, hear," cried the bulk of the merchants and traders.

"You mistake me," answered the governor. "I aim to serve your own interests as well as those of his Majesty's other subjects which transcend even yours."

"Trade is everything," snapped the hard-featured merchant.

"So long as 'tis rightly conducted," amended Master Burnet. "Bear in mind, my masters, that the whole history of our possessions on this continent disproves the statement just made that there is land enough for ourselves and the French. The French are the first to dispute this view.

"They plan openly to drive us into the sea. The New France they see in the future will embrace all the settlements of the Atlantic coast together with the inland wilderness."

"If you bait them sufficiently, doubtless they will seek to fight us," asserted a merchant.

"But they know not the English breed if they think to do so," cried a neighbor.

"Or the Dutchman either," said a third.

"Good! That is the spirit I want to arouse," acknowledged the governor, quick to seize what he thought an advantage. "Gentlemen, you have heard some of my evidence. Additional, if you wish it, can be laid before you.

"What I desire from you especially today is your support in a plan I have been considering for moderating the exit of goods to Canada. The volume reached in recent weeks passes all reason. If permitted to continue 'twill exhaust our supplies. It plays directly into the hands of——"

But he was not suffered to continue.

"Free trading!" shouted a group.

"Stick by the law, governor!" warned one.

"The law is the law!" cried a third.

The prosperous-looking merchant in the front row stood up and made himself heard by pounding his stick on the floor.

"Do I understand your Excellency to mean that you would alter the instructions received from the Lords of Trade?" he asked.

"My plan is rather to amend the carrying out of the law by certain restrictions until I can forward representations on the situation to their lordships," replied Master Burnet steadily.

"But as one of my brethren has just remarked, the law is the law.

"The trouble here, sirs, is that there is no law," declared the governor. "We have the suspension of the law, and in the interim there is no provision for a substitute statute."

"Tush, we want no such law," proclaimed the hard-featured merchant. "Let us not quibble. His Excellency might as well know the truth. Since Master Murray won his case we have been able to sell and buy as we chose. And our coffers have swollen thereby.

"The law was an ill-judged law. It restricted trade, reduced profits. Let the French secure furs if they wish. They may do the dirty work. We will sit back and reap the profits."

"Gentlemen, you still avoid my point," insisted the governor. "The profits you have made recently are unnatural profits, and were you in your right minds you would be the first to appreciate that they can not continue. I should be content to leave your education to the normal processes of time, but for the fact that the French are turning your assistance to account, and we are like to pay heavily to them for it in the long run."

"How?" inquired a skeptical voice.

"By permitting the French to confirm their prestige with the savages, by undermining the confidence in us of those Indian allies we have won hitherto. Your lot will be improved only so long as it pleases the French. If matters continue as they are, the French will force a war at the moment they deem most promising, and likely enough conquer us by reason of the very profits which you say have swollen your coffers."

"Better so, mayhap," shouted the hard-featured merchant. "Better have free trade under France than limited trade under England or any other country."

"You talk treason, sir," said the governor coldly. "Moreover, you talk foolishly. There is no freedom of trade in Canada——"

"Well, we have it here; and by ——, we'll keep it as long as we can," replied the merchant.

"That is not like to be very long, my masters," announced a new voice.

All eyes were turned to the door. There stood Andrew Murray, a fashionably cut blue plush coat draping his fine shoulders, half-revealing the canary-yellow vest beneath; a beautiful periwig framing his handsome, masterful face; a laced and cocked hat tucked under his arm.

He bowed low to the governor.

"I must beseech your Excellency's pardon for my unheralded entrance," he said. "I am but just arrived in town, and I hastened here to present my case to you."

He swept his eyes over the room as he spoke and fastened them upon my face.

"You are welcome, Master Murray," returned the governor. "Had I known where to reach you I should have invited your attendance."

"I am honored, sir."

Murray bowed again. His eyes passed from me to Peter's stolid features and the calm, impassive face of Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"I venture to intrude upon you," he continued, "because of information I possess which I am sure will be of interest to you and all others who have the prosperity of the province at heart."

"I am interested," said the governor impartially. "Pray state your case, Master Murray."

"I shall do so all the more readily, your Excellency, because I am persuaded you can have no knowledge of the crimes recently committed by persons who represent themselves to be your agents."

"So?" observed the governor.

"Yes, sir," Murray went on. "I see in this room three men whom I charge with the wanton destruction of a large quantity of furs and the murder of two of my servants and a number of friendly Indians."

And that there might be no mistaking the objects of his accusation Murray pointed his forefinger at my comrades and me. A rustle of interest agitated the audience. Murmurs arose and hostile glances were bent upon us.

"Be explicit, if you please," said the governor.

"I will, sir," replied Murray boldly. "The young man known as Harry Ormerod, with Peter Corlaer and a Seneca chief called Ta-wan-ne-ars, raided a fleet of canoes on the shore of the Cadarakui Lake near Oswego and burned hundreds of packs of valuable furs which the far-western savages were bringing in for trade."

"I have heard something of this matter," admitted Master Burnet. "But I understood the savages were in

charge of Monsieur de Joncaire, the French commandant at Jagara, and bound for Montreal."

"Monsieur de Joncaire was accompanying them, 'tis true," admitted Murray. "But the savages were bound for my own trading-stations. The loss, which will run into thousands of pounds, will fall upon our New York merchants."

The murmurs grew into an outburst of indignation which the governor quelled with difficulty. But before he could speak Murray continued his attack.

"Nor is that all, your Excellency. These same three men afterwards attacked from ambush and murdered two of my servants, a man named Bolling and a negro——"

"It sticks in my mind that both have been charged with murders of their own in the past," the governor broke in drily.

"They were never convicted of such a crime," returned Murray.

"Bolling was wanted for an attempt upon Master Ormerod's life in New York town," interjected Colden.

"I am not responsible for that," observed Murray. "It shows at best that there was enmity betwixt the two. But surely, my masters, enmity does not call for cold-blooded murder."

There was no misinterpreting the unanimity of the endorsement which his words received. Governor Burnet held up his hand for silence.

"I shall look into Master Murray's charges," he said. "So much, at least, he is entitled to. But first I wish to acquaint him with what I have laid before this gathering, all the more so because he is more vitally interested perhaps than any other.

"Master Murray, I am concerned over the extent to which the fur-trade is passing into French hands, and I am bound to say my information indicates that the French have your assistance in the matter. The quantities of trade-goods going up-river have enormously increased this Sum-

mer. They are hundreds of tons in excess of what formerly passed through Albany."

"Doubtless our trading-posts have profited thereby," suggested Murray blandly.

"On the contrary," returned Master Burnet with decision. "Our trading-posts have fared worse, if anything. Aside from the Iroquois, the savages are patronizing more and more the French traders. And as I have told these gentlemen here, the French have increased their trading-stocks already to such an extent that they have been able to establish parity with our prices."

"Yet the volume of furs coming through Albany has increased and not diminished," said Murray.

"What has that to do with the situation I have outlined?" demanded the governor with his first show of impatience.

"Everything, sir."

"I think not. Briefly, Master Murray, I am canvassing the sentiment of our merchants on the advisability of suspending for the time being, to some degree at any rate, the proclamation I issued in response to the action of the Lords of Trade in withholding the assent of his Majesty's government to our law prohibiting the trade in Indian goods with Canada."

Murray took snuff deliberately, and I, who had passed considerable time in his company, did not miss the gleam of frank hostility which showed in his eye.

"I am not surprized," he commented. "I am free to say, your Excellency, that I have noted hitherto a laxness on the part of the provincial authorities in administering the free-trade requirements of their lordships."

"You charge that?" inquired the governor coldly.

"I do, sir. And I give fair warning that, with a view to the best interests of the province and in response to the wishes of the majority of the merchants, I purpose to carry my complaint before the Privy Council at the earliest opportunity."

Governor Burnet rose from his chair. The cordiality was gone from his manner.

"This meeting is dissolved," he pronounced. "No, not a word, gentlemen"—this as several undertook to object—"I still hold his Majesty's commission as governor, and I purpose to secure assent to my authority by one means or another.

"I have striven to reason with you. I shall now proceed as seems best to me. Master Murray, file your charges in writing and be prepared to bear testimony in their defense. You may go."

XXIV

AN APPEAL TO THE LONG HOUSE

THE door of the Great Hall closed on the last of the turbulent group.

"But, your Excellency," I protested, "why do you permit Murray to make such charges without bringing up against him the information we gathered at La Vierge du Bois? Sure, 'tis some measure of offense to apply torture to a fellow-countryman; and for the rest, there is the testimony of Ta-wan-ne-ars to corroborate me."

Governor Burnet shook his head sadly.

"Naught would have pleased that clever rascal more than to have me confront him with you, Master Ormerod. You forget that unfortunately your own past is somewhat clouded in the eyes of the law. Did I charge him with anything on your evidence, he would assail you for a known Jacobite and outlaw, and whatever counter-charges we might make he would dismiss as mere efforts to offset your guilt."

"But——"

"No, sir, it may not be. Do you not agree with me, Colden?"

"I fear you are right, sir," replied the surveyor-general. "Murray hath worked up an intrigue which can not lightly be exposed. He hath set the entire province awry."

"'Tis that very state which concerns me most!" exclaimed the governor. "In my own Council I can not feel sure of a vote of approval upon any measure which would

go contrary to the fancied interests of these mad merchants. So rabid have they grown that I dared bring with me from New York only Master Surveyor-General, here. And of those from this neighborhood I might rely upon none others than Master Livingston and Captain Schuyler. The officers of the troops would obey my commands, and in all probability endorse my policy; but frankly I dare not force the issue."

"Why, 'tis incredible, your Excellency," I cried with heat. "Here we have, beside myself, Peter Corlaer, who is surely known for trustworthy, if I am not. And Ta-wan-ne-ars is a chief as well as a man of education, even according to white men's standards. Must we suffer this self-confessed traitor to escape scot-free?"

The governor abandoned his chair and paced the length of the hall, his hands clasped behind him. Five times he traversed it from the rough fireplace to the double doors hewn out of shaggy oak-slabs. Then he shook his head again.

"I dare not, Master Ormerod. Unfortunately, as I have said, and through no fault of your own, you are discredited in advance as a witness. Peter is known for a sturdy hater of the French and devoted to me and to those who think as I do, notably your friend Master Juggins in London.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars is an Indian. He will acquit me of intent to offend if I say openly that my enemies will refuse to accept his word against that of a great merchant like Murray."

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go is the friend of Ta-wan-ne-ars," said the Seneca. "He speaks with a straight tongue. It is better to hear what is unpleasant than to listen to smooth speeches which deceive."

The governor turned swiftly upon him.

"I thank you, chief," he answered. "You make it plain to me that I can speak to you without concealment."

"That is true." said Ta-wan-ne-ars gravely.

Governor Burnet hesitated a moment, deep in thought.

"There is no other way," he decided suddenly. "Draw up your chairs. I have much to ask of you, and 'tis no more than fair that I should present for you all the facts in the case.

"As I conceive the situation, the fate of this province and its neighbor colonies, as well as the sovereignty and prosperity of Great Britain, are at stake. And the future of the People of the Long House is intimately bound up with that of our people, as I think Ta-wan-ne-ars will concede."

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go speaks always with a straight tongue," replied the Seneca sententiously.

"Advices from Paris," continued the governor, "state that the Pretender has been called to the Louvre on two occasions for secret conferences. The Duke of Berwick is gone to Spain—'tis reported to arrange for contingents of troops. Master Ormerod will understand the seriousness of such news.

"I need not acquaint you with the preparations the French are making upon this continent, but it may interest you to know that the Duke of Newcastle has been pleased to write me, remonstrating over my inability to get along better with the prominent men of the province. This I deem most significant, for it is no more than the voice of Murray speaking through the medium of his Grace's pen.

" 'Tis for this reason as much as any other that I do not care to lock horns with Murray. To do so might very well secure my own recall, and that would leave the way open for Murray to prosecute his designs without any check whatsoever.

"I am in an *impasse*, gentlemen. In London a corrupt ministry is more interested in the spoils of office than in intelligent rule. In New York a powerful coterie of merchants, who have discovered a way by which, they are persuaded, they can all grow rich in a few years, have permitted themselves to become the active tools of an ingenious mind

which would purchase the return of the Stuarts at the price of handing over to French rule the British domain in North America.

"My sole reliance today is upon a few personal friends like yourselves—and the political keenness and military energy of the Iroquois."

Master Burnet bent his gaze upon Ta-wan-ne-ars, sitting erect in a plain wooden chair, the natural dignity of the Seneca offsetting the incongruity of his half-naked figure, the wolf's-head of his clan sprawled across his chest, with the civilized furnishings of the Great Hall.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars is listening," said the Indian.

"That is well," answered the governor. "For what I am about to say is of the utmost importance to Ta-wan-ne-ars and his race. You have heard me admit my impotence. You know that the rule of the English is in danger. Will you go with my ambassadors, Master Ormerod and Peter Corlaer, to the Ho-yar-na-go-war, the Council of the *roy-an-ehs,* and support them in asking for the intervention of the Long House to smash the Doom Trail and Murray's conspiracy to win control of the fur-trade from our hands?"

Ta-wan-ne-ars rose and his right arm went up in the Iroquis salute.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars will do as Ga-en-gwa-ra-go asks," his deep voice boomed.

Governor Burnet drew a deep breath of relief.

"I thank you, my brother," he said. "You have relieved the load of sorrows I have carried. I ask you this, you understand, not alone as a favor, an act of friendship, but because, as I think, your people will come to believe when they consider it that the success of Murray's plot will mean the crushing of the Long House by the French."

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go need not argue with Ta-wan-ne-ars," the Seneca responded. "Ta-wan-ne-ars believes as he does. Moreover, Murray and his friends are not the friends of the Long House, and we have old scores to wipe out in

their blood. If my brothers, Ormerod and Corlaer, are ready, we will leave at once."

Colden, who had been looking out of the window upon the fort parade, came quickly across the room.

"It will be best to await darkness," he advised. "The town is full of people, and amongst them may be some of Murray's desperadoes. His tools were not exhausted with the deaths of Tom and Bolling."

"That is so," approved the governor. "And it serves to remind me that you have further details of your adventures to acquaint me with. Do you stay and dine with me, and whilst we eat we may discuss affairs and take account of how to combat our enemies. By the way, Colden, where is the Belt of the Covenant Chain?"

The surveyor-general drew from a traveling-trunk in a corner a band of wampum about three feet long and eight inches wide. Crudely woven into it in different colored beads were the figures of an Indian and a white man with hands joined. The governor examined it curiously.

"This belt was given to me by To-do-da-ho," he said, turning to me. "He bade me, at any time I required speech with him or desired his friendship and assistance, to send it to him as a reminder of his pledge of alliance. I entrust it in your hands, Master Ormerod."

Several hours later, when the lights of Albany were gleaming through the night, the governor said good-by to us at a sally-port. He offered no parting advice, indulged in no rounded homilies. That was not his way. He had laid all his cards before us on the table; he had taken us completely into his confidence; he had told us how much depended upon our effort. He was content with that.

"A safe journey," he called cheerily, "and whatever William Burnet may do for you, doubt not he will attempt."

That was all.

We set our feet to the Great Trail and made camp toward morning in the woods beyond Schenectady, deeming it best not to show ourselves in the settlements.

Our journey was uneventful. We rapidly traversed the Mohawk and Oneida countries, and came presently to Ka-na-ta-go-wa, the seat of the Council-Fire of the Great League, where To-do-da-ho dwelt. Ta-wan-ne-ars' brothers of the Wolf Clan made us welcome and sent a messenger to the venerable *roy-an-eh,* announcing the arrival of a party of ambassadors from Ga-en-gwa-ra-go. The following morning we were invited to the Council-House.

In the oblong, high-roofed bark building, with the undying fire burning in its center, To-do-da-ho sat amongst his brother *roy-an-ehs,* the chiefs and Keepers of the Faith. Ta-wan-ne-ars pointed them out to me: To-nes-sa-ah of the Beaver Clan; Da-at-ga-dose and Sa-da-kwa-ha of the Bear; Ga-nea-da-je-wake of the Snipe; and so on. To-do-ha-ho himself was a wrinkled wisp of a man who would have seemed a corpse as he crouched down, burdened with heavy robes, but for the warm brightness of his eyes that glowed from under beetling brows.

He made me welcome in a speech of high-sounding phrases, which Ta-wan-ne-ars translated; and I replied as best I could through the same medium, confining my remarks to expressions of the honor I felt in being so received and the affection in which the *roy-an-eh* and his people were held by the governor. We smoked the ceremonial pipe as usual, and the council broke up.

The real business was transacted the next day when we three had speech privately with To-do-da-ho, and I gave him the Belt of the Covenant Chain and the message of the governor. He heard me out in silence, and sat for a while smoking, his eyes fixed on vacancy. This was his answer:

"I have heard your words, O white man whose name I can not say. Ta-wan-ne-ars, whom I have known since he was a boy, says that you speak with a straight tongue, but I did not need his endorsement of you. I am a very old man, and the one thing I have learned in life has been to tell true talk from false. I hope that you will soon be

given an Indian name, so that we can speak to you more politely.

"Moreover, I know, too, that Ga-en-gwa-ra-go would not have sent to me a messenger with a belt who could not be trusted. Therefore I answer you with a straight tongue.

"What Ga-en-gwa-ra-go says by your mouth is so. I have watched with uneasiness the efforts of the French to control the fur-trade. So have many of our wise men, but most of our people are busy with their hunting and other affairs and they do not consider such matters. In this they are much like the white people.

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go says that it is to the interest of the People of the Long House to break down the Doom Trail. I agree with him. But Ga-en-gwa-ra-go is a ruler of men, and he knows it is always difficult to induce a people to take a difficult course of action unless the suggestion comes from their midst. My counsel to you is that you continue on along the Great Trail to the country of the Senecas, and give the message of Ga-en-gwa-ra-go to Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, the Guardian of the Western Door.

"The Frenchman de Veulle has taken away the daughter of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, and you tell me that he has used her to set up a foul religion amongst the renegade Keepers of the Doom Trail. Murray is equally guilty with de Veulle in this matter. Do-ne-ho-ga-weh has a just cause for vengeance against them.

"Let him, as Guardian of the Western Door, send out belts for a meeting of the Ho-yar-na-go-war, giving warning that the French are building a fort at Jagara to be a menace against us and that they are encouraging Murray in his disregard of the rights of the Long House. So he will arouse the resentment of our people much better than could be done if I acted solely on the suggestion of Ga-en-gwa-ra-go."

"Will you support Do-ne-ho-ga-weh in a demand for an expedition against the Doom Trail?" I asked.

"I will," he replied.

There was no more to be said, and we resumed our journey that day. Peter and Ta-wan-ne-ars both approved of To-do-da-ho's suggestion. And indeed, as I thought it over, its sagacity became more and more apparent. 'Tis the instinct of any people to be suspicious of requests for assistance from outside their own ranks.

We sent messengers on ahead of us, and traveled leisurely, arriving at De-o-nun-da-ga-a on the sixth day after starting from Ka-na-ta-go-wa. Outside the village we encountered a party of young warriors of the Wolf Clan, who strung the scalps of Bolling, Tom and their Cahnuagas on a lance and marched before us in a kind of triumphal procession.

The splendid old Guardian of the Western Door, attended by his counselors and retainers, met us at the village limits and escorted us to the Council-House, where there was high feasting and a rendition of the Trotting Dance which is used to open councils or welcome ambassadors.

"*Ya-ha-we-ya-ha!*" chanted the leader.

"*Ha-ha!*" replied the dancers.

"*Ga-no-oh-he-yo!*" yelled the leader.

"*Wa-ha-ah-he-yo!*" howled the dancers.

"*Ya-wa-na-he-yo!*" sang the leader.

"*Wa-ha-ah-ha!*" came the rumbling response.

As on our former visit 'twas late at night when Do-ne-ho-ga-weh slipped back to our quarters, and we were able to talk freely of our mission. First, however, Ta-wan-ne-ars must recount our adventures at La Vierge du Bois and the scouting of the Doom Trail.

The *roy-an-eh's* face became convulsed with passion as Ta-wan-ne-ars described, in words I did not need to understand, the part which Ga-ha-no played in the evil life of the Keepers of the Trail. His hand played with the hilt of his scalping-knife as Ta-wan-ne-ars narrated how Peter and I had slain Red Death and Black Death.

Then Ta-wan-ne-ars translated my message from the governor and the advice of To-do-da-ho. I stressed the

fort at Jagara, repeating excerpts of the conversation of Joncaire and de Lery. I told him of the increase in the price of furs at Montreal, and vast quantities of trade-goods which were passing over the Doom Trail and the unwillingness of the New York merchants to understand the political aspects of the French policy in permitting them to reap such golden profits. I emphasized the attitude toward the People of Long House which the French would take once they fastened their grip on the fur-trade and were safely entrenched at Jagara.

"Two things may be done, O *roy-an-eh,*" I concluded. "Ga-en-gwa-ra-go might take up the hatchet against the French on behalf of Go-weh-go-wa and destroy the new fort at Jagara, or the People of the Long House might descend upon the Keepers of the Trail and destroy La Vierge du Bois and its wickedness. For Ga-en-gwa-ra-go to take up the hatchet would mean a long war, with much bloodshed, even if his people would obey him. For the People of the Long House to smash the Doom Trail would mean the use of one large war-party and at most a few weeks on the war-path. If the Doom Trail is smashed you need not worry over the fort at Jagara, for with Murray gone Ga-en-gwa-ra-go can soon control his own people, and we will dispose of Joncaire in due time. 'Tis for you to choose."

"*Yo-hay!*"[1] answered Do-ne-ho-ga-weh. "Your words have entered my ears, friend of my nephew. They are pleasant to me. I like to hear them. They arouse thoughts of the pain I wish to visit upon my enemies.

"I am much pleased that To-do-da-ho suggested you should come to me. It is true, as he says, that the People of the Long House will be more eager to fight if the appeal is made to them by one of their own leaders. I will make such an appeal.

"We will summon a council of the Senecas to meet tomor-

[1] "I have heard—I have understood."

row. I will present what you have told me to them. We will send out belts to the Cayugas, the Onondagas, the Oneidas, the Tuscaroras, the Mohawks. You shall come with me to the Ho-yar-na-go-war and hear me make good my promises.

"*Na-ho!*"

He knocked the ashes from his pipe, and rose to go; but in the doorway he tarried strangely.

"Has Do-ne-ho-ga-weh more to say to me?" I asked him through Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"Have you a father, white man?" he answered.

"My father is dead."

"My son is dead also. He died many years ago. I have a nephew—" a stern smile lighted his austere face—"but I would not have him otherwise.

"White man, your enemy is my enemy. You are a brave warrior. You are the friend of Ta-wan-ne-ars. Will you become my son?"

"*Ja, ja,*" muttered Peter in my ear, as Ta-wan-ne-ars translated with impartial accuracy. "Idt is a greadt honor."

"If Do-ne-ho-ga-weh thinks that I am worthy to be his son I shall accept his offer with pride," I replied.

"Good," he said phlegmatically, and his arm lifted in the gesture of salutation. "Tomorrow the Keepers of the Faith shall raise you up and find you a vacant name on the roll of the Wolf Clan."

XXV

THE COUNCIL OF THE *ROY-AN-EHS*

THE statesmen and warriors of the Senecas had come by hundreds to attend the tribal council at De-o-nun-da-ga-a. They squatted in serried ranks around the open place in the middle of the village where stood the *ga-on-dote,* or war-post, where public assemblies were held, where war-parties gathered when setting off upon expeditions, where prisoners were tortured and victories were celebrated.

They had come from near and far, from Nun-da-wa-o, the ancient village at the head of the Canandaigua Lake, which was the cradle of the tribe, and from the most remote *ga-na-sote* and the farthest frontiers of the immense domain which was ruled by the Keepers of the Western Door.

In front sat the eight *roy-an-ehs* and the two hereditary war-chiefs, the Wardens of the Door, the elective chiefs who had displayed merit in battle or negotiation, the Keepers of the Faith—and one white man, who was yet a Seneca, myself. Behind stretched row on row of warriors and huntsmen, and back of them the women and children.

The ceremonies were brief and were divided into two sessions upon different days. The first session was occupied mainly by the speech of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, explaining why he had summoned the council and pleading for authorization of the sending of belts to the other nations of the League so that the Ho-yar-na-go-war might be convened. He spoke at length in the midst of a silence so intense that the rustling of robes could be heard.

"You have heard my cause, O my people," he framed his peroration. "You know that the French have ravished one of the fairest daughters of the tribe. You know that I have been deeply wronged. You know that at Jagara, on land which is our land as much as that on which you now sit, the French are building a fort, and that they boast it will be a chain by which they will bind us in the future.

"You know that they scheme to gather into their own hands the fur-trade with the western tribes, so that we may no longer exact tribute of those who would pass through our territories to trade with the English. You know that ever since Onontio came to Quebec the French have been our enemies, and the English have been our friends. You know that these men, Murray and de Veulle, who have stolen my daughter, who have debased our ancient religion, who have deluded so many of the white men, who have built the foul nest of fiends who guard the Doom Trail, are the servants of the French.

"I ask you for vengence. I ask you for the right to go before the Ho-yar-na-go-war. I speak with a straight tongue. I have witnesses by me. One is my nephew. Ta-wan-ne-ars. You know him. The other is O-te-ti-an-i,[1] my white son, who is a brother of the Wolf Clan.

"They are Senecas. They have been to Jagara, and talked with the Frenchmen there. They were carried captives to La Vierge du Bois, and escaped. They have seen the evil which is at work. They have found the secret of the Doom Trail, and they will lead our warriors to it.

"If you will follow them, O my people, you will gain rich spoils and take many scalps. The cries of your captives will delight your ears. Your families will be proud of you.

"Na-ho!"

The council broke up into separate councils of the five clans of the tribe, the Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Snipe and Hawk.

[1] "Always Ready."

After the clan councils had come to agreement, the *roy-an-ehs* of the several clans, as spokesmen, met and reached a joint agreement. Their response was made at the second session of the tribal council on the following day by Ga-ne-o-di-yo of the Turtle Clan, the senior *roy-an-eh* of the tribe.

"We have heard the pleas of the Guardian of the Western Door," he said. "We have discussed the stories told by Ta-wan-ne-ars and O-te-ti-an-i. We believe that all three have spoken with straight tongues. We believe that the Frenchman de Veulle has put a slight upon us, as well as upon Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"We believe that Murray means harm to us. We believe that the trade over the Doom Trail is as dangerous to us as to the English. We believe that the French are our enemies.

"It is the judgment of the council that belts be sent to the brother nations for the meeting of the Ho-yar-na-go-war. Let the Counselors of the People decide what course is best.

"*Na-ho!*"

"*Yo-hay!*" echoed the audience.

That night the messengers were dispatched. They traveled night and day, with only the barest necessary intervals for food and sleep, and as they passed from nation to nation, the People of the Long House stirred with expectancy.

The Supreme Council of the League was summoned. Great events were under way. And on the heels of the messengers flowed a steadily swelling stream of men, women and children, for every family that had completed the harvest and Fall hunting was determined to be present upon so momentous an occasion.

The delegates of the Senecas found the Great Trail already choked with humanity when they set out from Nun-da-wa-o a week behind the messengers. It was like some highway of civilized life, with the difference that the current ran in but one direction. The faces of all were turned eastward toward the Onondaga Lake.

But when we reached the outskirts of Ka-na-ta-go-wa we encountered a second stream flowing westward. Senecas and Cayugas met and mingled with Oneidas, Tuscaroras and Mohawks, and Onondagas viewed the extraordinary confluence of people with grave interest.

The shores of the Onondaga Lake and the valley of the Onondaga River were outlined by the myriad camp-fires which marked the temporary habitations of this migratory swarm. The principal personages, of course, were entertained by their clan brethren in the Onondaga villages. But for the rank and file 'twas an occasion calling for the Indian's instinctive ability to make much out of nothing. Lodges of sticks and bark and skins, with fires in the doorways, sufficed for hundreds of families, and whole villages sprang up in a day, each grouped about some strong or well-known personality, a favorite orator or successful war-chief, whose name was appropriated for the site.

Dancing and games, trials of skill with weapons, singing and feasting and story-telling occupied the time of the multitudes to whom the Ho-yar-na-go-war was an opportunity for escaping the monotony of forest life. They left to their leaders the serious business of government.

The *roy-an-ehs* of the different tribes visited one another; consultations were held; and Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, Ta-wan-ne-ars, Peter and myself were called upon again and again to repeat our arguments and offer the evidence we had gathered. In this way the *roy-an-ehs* familiarized themselves with the subject in advance of its formal presentation. 'Twas their habitual method whenever possible, I was told.

It must have been a week after our arrival that Ta-wan-ne-ars entered the Council-House of the Onondaga Wolves and announced the belated arrival of the Tuscarora delegation.

"It ill becomes the youngest nation of the League to come last," remarked Do-ne-ho-ga-weh.

"Aye, and all the more so when they are allowed to appear only by courtesy," rejoined Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"How is that?" I asked, full of curiosity to familiarize myself with the novel customs of my adopted people.

"The founders of the Long House created the fixed number of *roy-an-ehs* and divided them amongst the five original nations," explained Ta-wan-ne-ars whilst Do-ne-ho-ga-weh resumed his interrupted conversation with several Oneida Wolves. "When the Tuscaroras and other nations applied for the protection of the League it was given with the understanding that they could not disrupt our ancient organization. In the case of the Tuscaroras, however, because they had been a great nation, we gave them the privilege of being represented at the Ho-yar-na-go-war, although their representatives may not take part in the deliberations."

"How many of the *roy-an-ehs* will attend?"

"All of the forty-eight are here."

"Is that the total?"

"No, brother. The Founders created fifty places, but when they themselves died it was determined that no other men should ever hold their names. So, as the Founders were both Mohawks, that tribe today has but seven, instead of the nine, *roy-an-ehs* apportioned to it, and when the Keeper of the Wampum calls the roll of the *roy-an-ehs* tomorrow there will be no answer to two of the names—unless it be that Da-ga-na-we-da and Ha-yo-wont-ha make answer from their lodges in the Halls of the Ho-no-che-no-keh."

That afternoon To-do-da-ho proclaimed the meeting of the Ho-yar-na-go-war for the next day, and my friends busied themselves in oiling their skins, painting their clan emblems and donning their choicest garments. In the morning the delegations of the six nations left their head-quarters, and marched with slow dignity to the Council-Ground, a broad meadow on the edge of the forest above the river valley.

In the center of the meadow a fire had been kindled from brands of the sacred, undying Council-Fire which burned

in the Council-House and had burned in one spot or another of the Onondaga Valley ever since that dim day, far, far back in the remote past of history, when the Long House was built.

Around the fire the *roy-an-ehs* ranged themselves, each with his assistant behind him. Of them all only Do-ne-ho-ga-weh was allowed two supporters, and I had been permitted to take the place of one of these—that of So-no-so-wa, the junior hereditary war-chief, who had been left at De-o-nun-da-ga-a to maintain the guard on the all-important Western Door. With Ta-wan-ne-ars beside me to give necessary instructions, I stood at Do-ne-ho-ga-weh's back and watched the imposing ceremonies.

My task was to hold the skin robe of the *roy-an-eh* upon which he sat during the deliberations. Ta-wan-ne-ars carried a bundle of red-cedar fagots, denoting that the Council was held to decide a question of war. Had its object been peaceful the fagots would have been of white cedar.

In the center of the circle, on the eastern side, stood the Keeper of the Wampum, Ho-yo-we-na-to, an Onondaga Wolf and seventh of the *roy-an-ehs* of his nation.

"Are you all here, *roy-an-ehs* of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee?" he called.

"We are all here," replied the *roy-an-ehs*.

"Now, then," he continued, "behold, I call the roll of you, you who were the Great Ones, you who were the Shining Ones, you who were joined with the Founders. And first I call the roll of the peoples. Are you here, O Da-go-e-o-ga, the Shield People?"

"We are here, O Keeper," replied Da-ga-e-o-ga, senior *roy-an-eh* of the Mohawks.

"Are you here, O Ho-de-san-no-ge-ta, the Name-Bearers?"

"We are here," replied To-do-da-ho for the Onondagas.

"Are you here, O Ho-nan-ne-ho-ont, the Keepers of the Door?"

"We are here," replied Ga-ne-o-di-yo for the Senecas.

"Are you here, O Ne-ar-de-on-dar-go-war, the Great Tree People?"

"We are here," replied Ho-das-ha-teh, senior *roy-an-eh* of the Oneidas.

"Are you here, O So-nus-ho-gwa-to-war, Great Pipe People?"

"We are here," replied Da-ga-a-yo of the Cayuga Deers.

"Are you here, O Dus-ga-o-weh-o-no, Shirt-Wearing People?"

"We are here," echoed a Tuscarora chief from the position of his people just outside the charmed circle of the *roy-an-ehs.*

Ho-yo-we-na-to raised his arms in a gesture of invocation.

"The peoples are here, O Founders who sit aloft with Ha-wen-ne-yu. Heed ye now, O peoples. I begin the Roll of the Great Ones."

And his resonant voice sounded like trumpet-blasts blown for a victory as he intoned the names of the *roy-an-ehs,* beginning with Da-ga-e-o-ga of the Mohawk Turtles and ending with Do-ne-ho-ga-weh of the Seneca Wolves. When, immediately after the name of Da-ga-e-o-ga, he called the names of the Founders, Ha-yo-wont-ha and Da-ga-no-we-da, he paused, and the immense concourse of Indians who stood and sat around the fringes of the meadow all turned their eyes skyward, as if expecting some demonstration from the Shining Ones.

Again the Keeper of the Wampum raised his arms in invocation. Then he took from the ground at his feet belt after belt of wampum, and from the designs woven into them recited, clearly and rapidly, the principal events in the recorded history of the League and the rules prescribed for the conduct of the Ho-yar-na-go-war. At the end of his recitative, which was crudely rhythmical, he addressed himself once more to the assemblage.

Under his direction the skin robes of the *roy-an-ehs* were deposited on the ground with the fagots in front of them.

The Mohawks, Onondagas and Senecas, the senior nations, who were brothers to each other, were ranged on the eastern half of the circle, with the rising sun at their backs. The Cayugas and Oneidas, who were sons to the three senior nations, with the Tuscaroras sitting behind them, were on the western side.

The Keeper of the Wampum next set fire to his own fagot by friction, and then passed around the circle, setting each fagot alight, so that a circle of little fires blazed up around the sacred Council-Fire. When all the fires were going he returned to his place and led the *roy-an-ehs* in a stately procession three times around the circle, each turning from time to time as he walked, so as to expose both sides of his person to the heat in typification of the warming influence of their mutual affections.

With the completion of the third round the fagots had been burned to cinders; the *roy-an-ehs* were all seated; and the deliberations of the Council were begun, the direction of affairs passing simultaneously from the hands of the Keeper of the Wampum to To-do-da-ho.

"We are met, O my brethren," began the venerable Onondaga, "to decide whether or no we shall lift the hatchet. Do-ne-ho-ga-weh speaks for the Keepers of the Door who ask for war."

There would be no point in repeating Do-ne-ho-ga-weh's oration. It was masterly, superior even to the address by which he carried his own people with him. The intervening days had given him time for thought and his statements were the more convincing, his figures more polished, his arguments more closely reasoned.

He arraigned the whole history of the intercourse of the French with the League. He described how de Veulle had lured away Ga-ha-no as a young maid. He expanded the designs of Murray and his French allies. He touched glowingly upon the friendship of the English. He pointed out how the fortunes of the two peoples had become intertwined.

The *roy-an-ehs* and the attendant throngs sat phlegmatically through it all. An audience of white men must have applauded or derided so positive a speaker, and I expressed my fears to Ta-wan-ne-ars. He smiled.

"It is the custom of my people," he whispered. "Wait, brother, until the speeches in answer come."

At last Do-ne-ho-ga-weh sat down. An interval of some minutes elapsed. Then a *roy-an-eh* of the Mohawks arose.

"My people have been much concerned over the power which Murray has acquired," he said. "But it has seemed to us that it was more dangerous to Ga-en-gwa-ra-go than to us. Why do not the English scotch this snake in their midst?"

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh explained succinctly the situation which existed in New York. A Cayuga responded, expressing amazement that the English, who were usually so sensible, should act in such a childish manner. He concluded by asking if the League might expect the help of the English in an attack upon the Doom Trail.

This was the most difficult point we had to overcome, and Do-ne-ho-ga-weh replied with circumspection.

"It is true, as my brother has said," he answered, "that we might expect the English to move with us in this matter. But my friends among the English send me word that their people are blinded for the moment by the falsities of Murray and the French. Their counsels are divided.

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go would welcome our action, and would support it and protect us from the vengeance of France. But he would find it difficult to act himself."

"If Ga-en-gwa-ra-go will not act, why should the League act?" demanded the Cayuga.

"Because it is to the interest of our people to act even more than it is to the interest of the English," retorted Do-ne-ho-ga-weh with impassioned energy. "Already the English are more numerous than we are. They have strong forts. We have only the forest. They have brothers across

the Great Water who will aid them. We have only the uncertain aid of our allies and subject tribes.

"Some day the French will try to drive the English from the land, but before they can do that they must destroy our League. It is we who will feel the first blow, and Murray's trade over the Doom Trail and his bands of Keepers of the Trail are in preparation for the destruction of the Long House. If you wait, O my people, you will perish. If you strike now you will live and the League will continue.

"The decision is in your hands. If you fight for the English you will survive and grow stronger. If you fight for the French or if you do not fight for the English, you will slowly be crippled and in a little time you will be no more feared than the Mohicans or the Eries.

"Na-ho!"

That was the last speech of the day, and the Council adjourned, only, as in the case of the Senecas' tribal council, to dissolve into minor councils of the *roy-an-ehs* of the different clan groups in each tribe. These continued throughout the following day, and as the *roy-an-ehs* of one clan agreed they consulted amongst themselves with the *roy-an-ehs* of another clan group, and so gradually the representatives of an entire tribe came to an accord.

When the representatives of each tribe had reached the unanimity which was required by the laws of the League, they discussed the situation informally with the *roy-an-ehs* of the other tribes; and on the fifth day To-do-da-ho summoned the final and decisive session of the Ho-yar-na-go-war.

The preliminary ceremonies were brief. After an invocation to the Great Spirit by the Keeper of the Wampum, To-do-da-ho delivered the common judgment of the *roy-an-ehs.*

"Murray and the Keepers of the Doom Trail are the enemies of the Long House. We must break them now before they grow too powerful. Therefore we have decided to take up the hatchet against them. But we shall send word to Ga-en-gwa-ra-go, appealing to him, by virtue of the

covenant chain between us, to support us against the vengeance of the French. This is the decision of the Ho-yar-na-go-war, O my people."

"*Yo-hay!*" answered the *roy-an-ehs.*

And the thousands of people in the meadow echoed the shout.

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh stood up.

"I have a favor to ask of the Council, O my brothers," he said. "Will you relieve me of my duties as Guardian of the Western Door so that I may raise the warriors who will go against the Doom Trail?"

"The request of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh is granted," replied To-do-da-ho after a short consultation with the *roy-an-ehs.* "Let him set up the war-post and strike it with his hatchet. Many brave warriors will be glad to follow so famous a chief. So-no-so-wa, who now holds the Door, shall continue his watch until Do-ne-ho-ga-weh returns to tell of the many scalps he took."

The bystanders responded with the war-whoop; but my attention was diverted by a young Onondaga who attempted to explain something to me in his dialect. Seeing I could not understand, Ta-wan-ne-ars approached and listened to him, a look of astonishment creasing his usually impassive face.

"The Onondaga says that a Frenchman has come to the village who claims to have a message for you," translated the Seneca.

"For me? Who can it be from?"

But even as I asked, a sense of foreboding gripped me.

"I do not know, brother. Let us hasten and find out."

We pushed our way through the masses of warriors already beginning the war-dance, and ran between the vegetable gardens toward Ka-na-ta-go-wa, the roofs of whose long houses showed above the tree-tops of the lower ground.

XXVI

THE EVIL WOOD

WE FOUND the messenger squatting placidly by the Council-House under the guard of several Onondagas, who obviously did not relish the sight of a Frenchman in their midst during the sitting of the Ho-yar-na-go-war. He put aside his pipe as we approached and stood up. But for his white skin, which was rather dingy under a coating of tan and dirt, 'twould have been difficult to distinguish him from the savages. He was of the usual type of *courrier du bois*, but with an unusually repellant countenance.

"You have a message for me?" I said.

"Are you Monsieur Ormerod?" he replied in his peasant's *patois*.

"I am."

He examined me with a sidewise squint out of his shifty eyes, and fished with one hand in the bosom of his filthy leather shirt.

"You will pay for the service?" he inquired warily.

"Anything in reason," I answered impatiently.

"She said you would pay what I asked," he temporized.

"She! Who?"

My worst fears were confirmed. I took one step forward and grasped the ruffian by the arm.

"Who?" I repeated. "Tell me, if you value your life! And give me the message."

"No offense, no offense, *monsieur*," he growled, pulling away from me. "Mademoiselle Murray——"

"Give it to me," I insisted. "We will talk of pay afterward."

He reluctantly withdrew his hand from his shirt, and offered me a folded square of heavy paper, stained with sweat. I opened it carefully, lest it tear, and saw these lines of fine, angular writing staring me in the face:

"La Vierge du Bois, ye 21st Sptr., 1725.

You said You wld. come if I calld for You. I Begge you now, in ye Name of All you Holde Deer, help Mee. I am to be Forcd to wed ye Chev. de Veulle. 'Tis ye Price he has Fixd for his Services to Mr. Murray. They have Procurd a Dispensation from ye Bishoppe of Quebec. They will Marrie me whenne Père Hyancinthe is returnd from a Visitt to ye Dionondadies by ye Huronne Lake. So much grace I have obtaned from them. Help Mee. MARJORY.

Do notte Trust ye messenjer who Carries this, but plese Pay him What he asks. Come by ye waye you Lefte through ye Woodde of ye False Faces.

Stunned, I read it a second time, then handed it to Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"What is your name?" I asked the messenger whilst Ta-wan-ne-ars scanned the paper.

"Baptiste Meurier," he said sullenly.

"How long since is it that you started from La Vierge du Bois?"

"Five weeks more or less. *Monsieur* has been difficult to find."

"More," I decided, remembering the date on the letter. "Do you know what the message said?"

"How should I, *monsieur?*" he objected quickly. "Me, I do not read."

"Was there no other word?"

"*Mais, non.*"

"Who gave you the paper?"

"Who but the *mademoiselle* herself?"

"How did she happen to choose you?"

He protruded his chest.

"Who better could she select than Baptiste Meurier?" he replied. "North of the Lakes every one knows Baptiste Meurier—and I am not unknown to the Iroquois."

"But how did the *mademoiselle* hear of you, Baptiste?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can say? A beautiful young person says she has a mission of much importance and profit to be performed. I reply I will go anywhere for a price. I am told I have only to name it. And so I am here, *monsieur.*"

"And what is your price?" I inquired, amused despite myself by the cool insolence of the scoundrel.

"Two hundred livres," he said instantly.

"Very well. It shall be paid. You will be detained here for a time, and I will purchase for you a sufficient number of beaver-pelts to defray that sum. Is that satisfactory?"

"Why should I have to wait?" he parried. "*Peste,* Winter draws on fast, and I——"

"You will wait," I cut him off. "And you will be paid."

And, turning to Ta-wan-ne-ars, I asked him to give the necessary instructions to the Onondagas. The messenger, a look of sour satisfaction on his cunning face, was marched off to undergo the restraint of an unwelcome visitor.

"Well?" I said to Ta-wan-ne-ars.

The Seneca returned me the letter.

"See," he said, pointing to the wild geese flying in pairs to the south, "the cold weather is coming. For the last week the northern sky has been hard and clear. There has been snow beyond the Lakes."

"What does that mean?" I demanded.

"That Black Robe will be delayed in returning from his visit to the Dionondadies. And that is a very good thing for us, brother. But for that I think we would be too late."

"But we shall have fighting," I exclaimed. "The Keepers will soon discover us, and no matter how numerous we may be they will fight desperately. They may carry her away to Canada before we reach La Vierge du Bois."

"That is true," he admitted. "And the thought Ta-wan-

ne-ars had, brother, was that we might leave to Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and Corlaer the breaking of the Doom Trail whilst you and I with a handful of warriors marched around by the way we escaped, as the white maiden advises in her letter. That way is not guarded, for none has known it, and perhaps we may hide in the Wood of the False Faces and bear off the maiden in the confusion of a surprize attack."

"It sounds reasonable," I said doubtfully. " 'Tis preferable to trusting to the main attack."

"There is no other plan," he rejoined with energy. "Moreover, as my brother knows, Ta-wan-ne-ars seeks to save Ga-ha-no, too."

The hint of pain in his voice, which was never absent when he spoke of his lost love, shamed me for the instinctive selfishness which had made me concerned only with my own troubles.

"We will not save one without the other," I cried. "No, Ta-wan-ne-ars, do we not owe our lives as much to her as to Marjory?"

"What you say is true," he replied. "But let us not talk of what we will do until the time comes. I hope that the Great Spirit will be lenient with my Lost Soul, yet it may be her time has not come. If it has come we shall save her. If it has not Ta-wan-ne-ars will try again."

"And so will I."

"My brother is generous, as always," he said simply. "Now we must tell what we have learned to Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, and arrange our plans with him."

The Guardian of the Western Door was the center of an immense mob of warriors who danced around the war-post which had been planted in the Council-Place. Man after man, chanting the deeds he had performed or those he pledged himself to in the future, rushed up and struck the post with his hatchet in token of his intent to participate in the expedition.

The grim face of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh was alight with the joy of battle.

"Behold, O my son," he called to me, "the warriors of the Eight Clans are with us. Our brothers of the Turtle, Beaver, Bear and Wolf, and our younger brothers of the Snipe, Heron, Deer and Hawk, all hunger for the scalps of the Keepers of the Trail.

"A thousand braves will follow us on the war-path. We will give the French a lesson. They shall see the might of the Long House."

But the light faded from his features as Ta-wan-ne-ars told him of the message from Marjory. A look of cold hatred accentuated the grimness of the hooked nose and high cheekbones.

"The French dog de Veulle is wearied of Ga-ha-no," he rasped. "He has had enough of the red maiden. Now he craves the white. Yes, it is well that my red nephew and my white son should go against this man who knows no laws to curb his lust.

"He may think that I am only an Indian, but my fathers have been *roy-an-ehs* and chiefs for more moons than I could count in the whole of a moon. They sat beside the Founders. They took in marriage and they gave in marriage. It is time that this insult to their memory was wiped out. Let it be wiped out in a river of blood. Then, O my nephew and my son, draw his scalp across his trail so that no man can tell he ever passed. I charge you, do not spare him."

"We will not spare him, O *ha-nih*,[1]" I promised.

"Good! It shall be as you ask. Corlaer shall guide me to the Doom Trail. How many warriors are to go with you?"

We debated this point together, and decided that for purposes of swift movement and secrecy we had best restrict our escort to twenty men. Do-ne-ho-ga-weh approved this number.

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[1] Father.

"Do nothing, if you can help it, until we have begun our attack," he said. "If you must move without us, rely upon flight, for you can not hope to succeed by fighting."

The remainder of that day was devoted to the organization of our party and the instruction of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and his lieutenants in the geography of the Doom Trail and the bearing of La Vierge du Bois, which, it must be remembered, no hostile tongue had been able to describe until Ta-wan-ne-ars and I had escaped from the clutches of the False Faces.

Our party mustered at dawn the next morning. It consisted of twenty stalwart young Seneca Wolves, each man selected by Ta-wan-ne-ars for strength and wind. Despite the chill of advancing Winter in the air, they were stripped to the waist, their leather shirts rolled in packages which were slung from their shoulders. In addition to their clothing and weapons each man also carried two lengthy contrivances of wood, with hide strips laced across them.

"What are they for?" I asked as Ta-wan-ne-ars presented me with a pair and showed me how to fasten them on my back so that the narrower ends stuck up over my head.

"*Ga-weh-ga*—snow-shoes," he replied. "In the wilderness, brother, the snow lies deep, and we should sink down at every step once the ground was covered after the first storm. You must learn how to use the *ga-weh-ga,* for otherwise you would be helpless."

Few Indians in the long chain of encampments in the Onondaga Valley saw us march forth, and those who did thought we were only an advance scout, for we kept our purpose a strict secret, even from the warriors of our escort. They were told no more than that they were given an opportunity to go upon a hazardous venture which should yield them fame and a proportionate toll of scalps.

That was all they wanted to know. Ta-wan-ne-ars was a leader they had fought under before. I was assigned a

wholly undeserved measure of fame because of my recent adventures in his company.

We marched rapidly, taking advantage of the withering of the foliage to abandon the Great Trail and cut across country through the forest, which stood untouched outside the infrequent clearings of the Iroquois. For three days we averaged thirty miles a day, and each day, when we camped, I practised with the snow-shoes on some level bit of ground, learning how to walk without catching the points and tripping myself.

We had not gone very far on the fourth day when O-da-wa-an-do, the Otter, a warrior who had attached himself to me, pointed through the leafless trees toward a grayish-white bank which was rolling down upon us from the north.

"*O-ge-on-de-o,*" he said. "It snows."

The word was passed along the line, and Ta-wan-ne-ars ordered the warriors to don their shirts. Fifteen minutes later the snow began to fall. Driven by a piercing wind, it descended like a vast, enveloping blanket, coldly damp, strangling the breath, blinding the eyes, numbing the muscles.

We struggled along against it until we came to a hillside scattered with large boulders. Here we halted and built shelters for ourselves by roofing the boulders with pine saplings we hacked down with our tomahawks. Under these, with fires roaring at our feet, we made shift to resist the cold.

The snow fell for the better part of two days, so thickly as to preclude traveling, and during that time we dared not stir from shelter, except to collect firewood. In the evening of the second day the storm passed, and the stars shone out in a sky that was a hard, metallic blue.

"We have lost much time, brothers," said Ta-wan-ne-ars, "and we have had a long rest. Let us push on tonight."

After the fashion of the Iroquois he always gave his commands in the form of advice; but no warrior ever thought of disputing him.

"I no longer see the Loon above us," I remarked to him as I put on my snow-shoes. "How shall you find your way?"

"The Great Spirit has taken care of that," he answered, and he raised his arm toward the sparkling group of the Pleiades. "There are the Got-gwen-dar, the Seven Dancers. They shine for us in the Winter, and we shall guide our steps by them."

Our progress that night and for several days afterward was slowed considerably by my clumsiness on snow-shoes. But The Otter and other warriors went to considerable pains to help me, picking out the easiest courses to follow, quick with hint or advice to remedy my ignorance. I became proficient enough to travel at the tail of the column, although my companions could never march as rapidly as they would have done without me.

After starting we met only one party of Oneida hunters, who had not heard of the decision of the Ho-yar-na-go-war to take the war-path against Murray. The Mohawks had all retired to their villages for the Winter, and the wilderness which was traversed by the Doom Trail was deserted because of the universal Indian fear of the False Faces. Ta-wan-ne-ars and I discussed this point as we neared the forbidden country, and I suggested that he tell his followers our destination.

He waited until we were a long day's march from and well to the northwest of the goal. Then he gathered the warriors about him as they mustered for the trail.

"Soon, O my brothers," he said in the musical, cadenced Seneca dialect which I was beginning to take pleasure in understanding, "we shall strike our enemies. It is a desperate enterprise you go upon. No war-party ever set out to risk such heavy odds. No warriors of the Long House were ever called upon to practise such caution, to reveal such courage.

"O my brothers, we are going into the Wood of Evil, the haunt of the False Faces which is the breeding-place of all

the wickedness that brands the Keepers of the Doom Trail. You will face much that is horrible. You will be threatened with spells and witchcraft. But I ask you to remember that my brother O-te-ti-an-i and I passed through all such perils without harm. Keep your hearts strong."

"*Yo-hay,*" muttered the warriors in gutteral assent. "We will keep our hearts strong, O Ta-wan-ne-ars."

Their faces were more serious than before, but they exhibited no signs of fear. Several asked questions as to the False Faces and their rites, and we explained to them the false atmosphere of horror which had been spread designedly to protect the traffic of the Doom Trail.

We moved much more cautiously now that we were near our journey's end, with three scouts always in front, one on either flank of the path we trod. But we saw no signs of other men, although many times we came upon bear-tracks. Toward evening we struck the waters of the tumbling little river through which Ta-wan-ne-ars and I had waded that night after Marjory had released us.

Here we rested whilst scouts went ahead as far as the edge of the Evil Wood. They returned to report not a footprint in the snow. We ate a little parched corn mixed with maple-sugar and some jerked meat we carried in our haversacks.

About midnight we all moved forward, Ta-wan-ne-ars leading the line. The oaks and elms, maples and willows, which had composed the elements of the forest, now gave place to tall, funereal firs, whose massive jade-green foliage remained untouched by the icy breath of Winter.

It seemed as if we had entered a different world when they closed around us. The stars had twinkled through the bare branches of the other trees. Here were utter darkness and a far-away, mournful music of wind rustlings and clashing boughs. Grotesque shadows darted vaguely over the white ground as the trees swayed and groaned. In the distance an owl hooted solemnly. The Otter touched my shoulder.

"Did you hear the owl?" he murmured.

"Yes," I whispered back.

"It is cold for an owl to leave his tree-hole."

He threw back his head, and I started at the fidelity of the repetition.

"Too-whoo-oo! Too-hoo!"

We listened, but there was no answer. Instead, after a brief interval, the howl of a wolf resounded.

A few yards farther on the owl hooted again. The line halted, and the warrior in front of him whispered that Ta-wan-ne-ars wished to speak with me. I passed by him and several others and came to where the chief stood, peering, or trying the peer, into the night.

"There was something strange about the owl, brother," he said. "The warriors told me that the Otter answered it, yet it did not reply. And then the wolf——"

A yell as of fiends from hell shattered the mantle of silence. Flames spurted through the firs, and in the gleam of the discharges and of torches thrown into our midst I had a fleeting glimpse of hideous masked figures bounding between the tree-trunks.

"Keep your hearts strong, brothers of the Long House," shouted Ta-wan-ne-ars. "They are only Cahnuaga dogs. Stand to it."

He fired as he spoke. I imitated him. Our men shot off a scattering volley. Then the False Faces were amongst us, coming from all sides, springing out of the ground, dropping from the very branches overhead and wielding their *ga-je-was*, or war-clubs, with dreadful effect.

XXVII

GA-HA-NO'S SACRIFICE

THERE was no time to reload. We fought with ax and knife as best we could. Ta-wan-ne-ars and I, with half a dozen of our warriors, crowded back to back. The rest of our party were cut off in twos and threes.

Resistance was hopeless. The swarms of False Faces seemed to care nothing for death if only they could bring down an Iroquois. They eschewed steel altogether, and battered down opposition with their knotted war-clubs, which shattered arms and shoulder-blades, but seldom killed.

I was knocked senseless by a blow which I partially warded with my tomahawk. When I came to I was lying in the snow in front of a huge fire. My arms were bound and my head ached so violently that I felt sick.

"Is my brother in pain?" asked the voice of Ta-wan-ne-ars.

I rolled over to find him lying beside me, the blood from three or four trivial cuts freezing on his head and shoulders.

"Yes," I groaned, "but 'tis naught."

"There was treachery," he said. "They knew we were coming, and they lost many men so that they might take us alive."

"All our warriors——" I faltered.

He turned his head to the left; and, following his gaze, I saw that I was on the right of a line of recumbent figures, which my dizziness would not permit me to count.

"No, not all, I think," Ta-wan-ne-ars answered after a

moment. "Five are slain and fourteen others lie here. But I do not see the Otter."

He addressed the warrior next to him, but none of our fellow-prisoners could account for the Otter.

"The Otter suspected something wrong," I said. " 'Twas he who answered the owl's call."

"It may be he escaped," replied Ta-wan-ne-ars. "I must warn our brothers to say naught of him. If the keepers do not suspect, they may believe they have all of us safe in their net."

He whispered his warning to the man beside him, and it was passed down the line.

"Your head is much swollen, brother," he said, rolling over again so as to face me. "Let Ta-wan-ne-ars make shift to bathe it with snow."

A shadow fell athwart us as we lay and a mocking voice replied for me:

"By all means, most excellent Iroquois. I trust you will nurse our valuable captive back to full strength and health."

I struggled to a sitting position, for I liked not to lie at de Veulle's feet, however much I might be at his mercy.

"So you walked into the spider's web," he continued, standing betwixt me and the firelight which ruddied his sinful face. "A woman's plea—and you threw caution to the winds! You fool! I used to value you as an enemy, but 'tis tame work fighting against a man who thinks I keep so easy a watch as to permit our beautiful friend to come and go as she lists."

"The letter was a bait?" I exclaimed incredulously.

"For you—yes. I say again—you fool! Baptiste took the letter to Murray, and Murray read it to me. It could not have been contrived more skilfully to suit our plans."

'Twas ridiculous, no doubt, but I was easier in my heart for assurance that Marjory had not known her appeal was used as a lure. It enabled me to maintain a stoicism of demeanor I did not feel.

"Well, 'twas kind of you to make such haste," he went

on, sneering down at me. "You will be in time for the wedding after all. Oh, never fear; you shall be permitted to live that long. We have plenty of meat in this bag to supply diversion for our savages in the meantime.

"You, my friend, and the noble Iroquois here"—he kicked Ta-wan-ne-ars viciously—"shall be kept for the last. Who knows? We may have a new Mistress of the False Faces then. We are not pleased with the present one. There was something uncommonly odd about the circumstances of your escape—although 'tis true I had the little wildcat in my arms at the time—and it would add to the aroma of the mystery to have a white Mistress for a change. Aye, that is an idea worth considering."

He switched suddenly into the Seneca vernacular.

"Are you all here, Iroquois dogs?" he demanded curtly. "The scouts reported twenty warriors."

"All are here, French mongrel," returned Ta-wan-ne-ars pleasantly.

De Veulle kicked him.

"Keep that for the torture-stake," he advised. "We have five corpses and fourteen warriors and yourself. That is all?"

"All," reiterated Ta-wan-ne-ars.

De Veulle passed along the line, cross-questioning each prisoner to an accompaniment of kicks and threats. All told the same story. Next to success in battle nothing pleased an Iroquois more than the opportunity to exhibit indifference to torture. De Vuelle seemed satisfied. The mistake he made was in failing to understand that the scouts had not counted Ta-wan-ne-ars, a chief, as a warrior. He returned to my side, and summoned a host of masked figures from the surrounding shadows. They jerked us to our feet, stamped out the fire and escorted us over the trampled, bloody snow where we had fought, through the gloomy aisles of the Evil Wood and into the irregular streets of La Vierge du Bois.

The dawn was a mere hint of pink in the eastern sky, but

the Cahnuagas and their allied broods of renegades were all awake to greet us, and our guards forced a passage through the mass with difficulty. To our surprize, we were carried by the oblong hulk of the Council-House, and traversed the Indian village without stopping. Ahead of us loomed the tower of the chapel and the house where Murray dwelt, encircled by its stockade.

Two men stood by the gate of the stockade to greet us. One was Murray, debonair as ever in a frieze greatcoat, with a showing of lace at the collar, and a cocked hat. The other was Baptiste Meurier.

The unsavory face of the *courrier de bois* grinned appreciation of my astonishment.

"*Peste, monsieur!*" he exclaimed. "It seems you are a slow traveler. I feared I might be behind you, but I arrived twenty-four hours in advance. I have to thank you for the beaver-pelts. They were a sufficient bribe for my immediate release."

"That will do, Baptiste," interjected Murray.

And to me:

"One might think the animal deserved credit for a plan in which he was the humble instrument of superior intellects—which, I am bound to say, displayed their superiority mainly by seizing upon the opening presented to them by fortune. No, no; even had the good Baptiste been delayed we should have been ready for you. Heard you ever, Ta-wan-ne-ars, of scouts who wore bears' pads for moccasins?"

For the first and only time during our acquaintance Ta-wan-ne-ars was surprized into a look of chagrin.

"We thought it was late for bears to be out," he admitted.

Murray chuckled with amusement.

"Quite so, quite so! And so you visit us once more, Master Ormerod. I confess 'tis an unexpected pleasure which we shall strive to make the most of."

"Sir," I said earnestly, "it makes little difference to me what is my fate, but I conjure you by whatever pretensions

to gentility you possess to give over your plan of selling your daughter."

He took snuff with his odd deliberation, and his face became as impassive as an Indian's.

"The words you choose for your appeal do not commend it to me," he returned. "Nor do I perceive what business of yours it may be to question my daughter's marriage."

Now, what put it in my head I know not, unless it was the fact that in her letter to me Marjory had spoken of him as "Mr. Murray"; but I leaped to the instant conclusion that she was not his daughter. Sure, no man could have disposed of his own daughter so cold-bloodedly!

"She is not your daughter in the first place," I retorted boldly. "And in the second place, she has expressed to me her abhorrence of the marriage, as you know."

His face revealed no expression but for a faint tremor of the eyelids.

"Zooks," he remarked mildly after an interval of silence, " 'tis strong language that you use. You are a headstrong young man, Master Ormerod. Can it be that you have some personal interest in the matter?"

Again some instinct prompted me.

"I have," I asserted. "Your daughter prefers me to the man you would force upon her."

"Really," he replied, "you possess vast self-assurance. You are my deadly enemy, you have sought by every means to ruin me, you were caught in an attempt to depredate my home—yet you would pose as a suitor for my daughter's hand."

"She is not your daughter," I repeated. "And as a suitor, according to your estimates of the world's opinion, I am far more eligible than this Frenchman."

"You are scarcely wise to say so to his face, and I beg leave to differ with you. I find the Chevalier de Veulle a very eligible young man, of rank in the world, of achievement, of distinct promise for the future."

"If you can call a man eligible who was not even eligible

for continued residence at the most profligate court in Europe, I agree with you."

"Tut, tut," remonstrated Murray. "Your words are not those of a gentleman, sir. We will abandon the subject. Where do you propose to incarcerate the prisoners, *chevalier?*"

"I would not risk them a second time in the keeping of the savages," said de Veulle. "Let us try your strong-room. There you and I can have an eye to their security."

"That is well conceived. Is there any news of Père Hyacinthe?"

"I have stationed a man at the river-crossing to bring word the instant he arrives."

"I applaud your thoughtfulness. This continued delay in the ceremony is annoying. Master Ormerod, your sufferings are upon your own head."

I looked eagerly for Marjory's face as we were marched across the yard inside the stockade and through the heavy timber doors of the house. But she was not visible. The house was sturdily built, evidently with an eye to defensibility, and the cellar beneath it, to which we were conducted, was floored with clay and walled with immense wooden slabs. Our guards examined our bonds carefully, fastened our legs and then left us, three of them sitting just outside the door at the foot of the stairs which ran down from the kitchen above.

We remained there three days, without intercourse with any one except our Indian jailers, who brought us messes of food twice daily. In that time the bump on my head was reduced and Ta-wan-ne-ars' cuts began to heal.

On the third day several Cahnuaga chiefs visited us and removed one of our Senecas with an assurance that he was destined for the torture-stake. The man laughed at their threats, and called back to his brothers that he would set them a good example. I do not doubt that he did.

On the fourth day we were eating our meager fare of boiled corn when the door was flung open violently and the

gaunt figure of Black Robe entered unannounced. Behind him, obviously unwillingly, walked Murray.

"Which is the Englishman Ormerod?" demanded the priest in French.

"Here I am, father," I answered, standing up as well as I could.

"Mistress Murray tells me that you have won her affections?" he asked coldly.

My heart leaped with sudden joy.

"That is true, father," I said.

"And you love her?"

"As much as a man may, father."

He turned upon Murray with a gesture of decision.

"There!" he exclaimed. "You have it in the face. What do you expect of me? Would you have me violate God's sacrament by wedding a maid against her affections? Some priests might do so, but I will never! Marriage without affection is adultery."

Murray's discomfiture was comical. I was quick to seize the opportunity presented to me.

"He knows how we stand, father," I declared. "He himself asked me concerning it when I was brought here."

Père Hyacinthe bent upon Murray a glance of deep disdain.

"This is not well, *monsieur,*" he said. "You have told me an untruth."

"You leap to conclusions, my good sir," returned Murray, who had now regained his poise. "The maid does not know her own mind. She is a conquest for the Church, and her alliance with the Chevalier de Veulle cements the great work we are undertaking together."

"I will have naught to do with it," responded the priest with decision. "Not even to admit her into the Church would I tolerate the fastening upon herself, her husband and myself of a mortal sin. As for the Chevalier de Veulle, I will say nothing at present. But I am not satis-

fied with everything here at La Vierge du Bois. I shall have more to say on that score later."

He went out and up the stairs, and Murray, after a moment's hesitation, followed him.

But our reprieve was brief. The next morning an augmented force of jailers appeared. The thongs on our arms were tightened; our legs were unlashed; and we were marched up into the wintry sunshine again, our eyes blinking at the unwonted light.

The village was deserted, and we perceived the reason when we reached the Council-Place and saw the long row of stakes which stretched before the background of the green firs of the Evil Wood. Jeers and cries of derision greeted us.

The False Faces strung their ill-omened circle around us, and the feather-tufted Keepers and their women and children pressed close to view the gruesome spectacle. We were bound to the stakes, Ta-wan-ne-ars and I in the middle of the line; and almost at once the torturing began upon the unfortunates at the two extremities. Their songs and shouts of defiance soon gave way to a sinister silence, as they fought with all their will-power to curb the agony which bade them cry for mercy.

The horror of it first sickened me, then flogged me into a red-hot tempest of anger. And in the midst of the orgy of bestiality Murray and de Veulle penetrated the circle of False Faces, with Marjory, white-faced, tight-lipped, between them. They walked up to the stake to which I was bound.

"I deeply regret, my dear," said Murray in a voice which was conscientiously paternal, "that you must be exposed to this spectacle——"

" 'Tis no more distressing than the knowledge of your wickedness," she flashed. "You have overset my belief in a cause I had thought holy."

"Well, we will not talk politics, if you please," he replied. "I want you to realize now beyond question the fate which

awaits this misguided young man upon whom you have been so ill-advised as to pin your affections."

"Would you like to walk nearer the other stakes and study what has been done to the Senecas upon whom the torture has been begun?" suggested de Veulle suavely.

She eyed him with such scorn that even he felt it, for his face hardened appreciably.

"No, sir," she answered; "I shall not be contributing to your entertainment any more than I can help."

Murray addressed me.

"We are making a bargain with the lady, Master Ormerod. She is to renounce her objections to de Veulle, own herself mistaken in her feeling of affection for you—and you are to be permitted to escape when she has sealed her engagements."

"Do not think of it, Marjory," I called to her. "I mind this not at all. And fear not. Help will come to you."

A tinge of color showed in her cheeks, and she stepped to my side.

"I can not let you die, Harry," she said with a sob. "Indeed I will not be able to stand the thinking of it. Better anything—better marriage to this beast—than—than—that!"

"You are wrong," I urged her. "You must not. I should go mad if you did. I should hate myself! I——"

I twisted my head toward Ta-wan-ne-ars beside me.

"Bid her not, brother," I appealed to him. "Tell her I do not fear to pay the price! And why should I escape if you——"

His granite features softened as his eyes met hers. But before he could speak the scene shifted with startling rapidity. There was a bulge in the ring of False Faces, and Ga-ha-no burst into the group.

Dressed in her uniform as Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-as-tase-ta, the kilt and moccasins, she fronted de Veulle with eyes blazing, breast heaving.

"Do you seek now to buy the white maiden with this man's life?" she stormed.

"You have no place here," he replied in the Cahnuaga dialect. "Go away. You will make——"

"You shall not!" she defied him. "You have had your pleasure with me. Now you would like to have a woman of your own color. You shall not! I have been bad. I have forgotten the ways of my fathers. I have betrayed a good man."

She threw a glance at Ta-wan-ne-ars, straining at his bonds.

"For that I am sorry, but it is too late!" she exclaimed. "White maiden," she cried to Marjory, "do not listen to this man. He is more wicked than I—and I am now a creature of Ha-ne-go-ate-geh!"

De Veulle waved his arm toward the attentive circle of False Faces.

"Remove the Mistress," he ordered. "She is hindering the torture."

The False Faces moved forward reluctantly, but Ga-ha-no acted without hesitation. A knife leaped from a fold of her kilt, and she sprang upon de Veulle like the wildcat to which he had likened her. He retreated, and ripped out his own knife.

"Seize her, Murray," he panted in French. "She is insane."

But she closed with him, and the two knives sank home at the same instant. Hers pierced de Vuelle to the heart. His drove to the hilt into her right breast, and she staggered back, coughing blood, against the rigid form of Ta-wan-ne-ars, bound fast to the stake.

"Ga-ha-no—was not—worthy of—Ta-wan-ne-ars," she gasped as her head slipped down his chest. "It—is—better—so."

No torture could have distorted his face into the image of frenzied despair which it displayed as he strove uselessly to bend down to her.

"My Lost Soul!" he muttered. "Oh, Ha-wen-ne-yu, my Lost Soul! Oh, Great Spirit, my Lost Soul!"

Marjory crept nearer to me, the horror in her face turning to pity, the tears streaming from her eyes.

"The poor lass!" she cried softly. "The poor, brave lass!"

XXVIII

THE MIGHT OF THE LONG HOUSE

THE silence of consternation gripped the hordes of the Keepers of the Trail. The sea of painted, scowling faces exhibited one frozen expression of awe at the suddenness of the tragedy. Only Murray gave no indication of feeling as he knelt by de Veulle's side.

"Where is Black Robe?" I whispered to Marjory, shivering on my shoulder.

"He went away last night. There was a call from Ga-o-no-geh, a village down the Trail. I think he was tricked."

"Would he——"

Murray stood up, wiping a spot of blood off one of his hands with a laced handkerchief.

"He is gone," he remarked impartially. "'Twas no more than to be expected. A man can not mix politics with women—especially uncivilized women."

"Give a look to the Indian girl," I urged.

He shrugged his shoulders as if to say it was not worth while; but Marjory stooped over Ga-ha-no, composed the disordered black tresses and closed the wildly staring eyes.

"'Tis useless, Harry," she said. "She is dead."

"Ga-ha-no—is—dead!" repeated Ta-wan-ne-ars blankly.

His heaving muscles relaxed, and he hung limp in his bonds against the stake.

"At the least, the woman gave you an avenue of escape from an intricate problem," commented Murray. "You do not seem glad, my dear."

"I am not glad," retorted Marjory scornfully. "And I

am right content that you should be unable to understand why I will be mourning for her."

"Ah, well, we have never understood each other, have we?" rejoined Murray, taking snuff absent-mindedly. "Come, we will give orders for the removal of the unfortunate pair, and——"

The horror dawned once more in Marjory's face.

"And what?" she gasped.

"You forget, Marjory, that my savage henchmen have work to do," he answered nonchalantly. "I take it for granted that you do not wish to remain and view their labors?"

"You—you would——"

Emotion shocked her; but she fought for her self-control.

"You would leave these—these men—Master Ormerod—to—to——"

"And why not?" he replied. "They are enemies. As I have had occasion to tell him ere this, Master Ormerod has sought to contrive my ruin. Why should I spare him?"

"You know not the meaning of humanity, then?" she cried, anger striving with terror for control of her voice.

"'Tis a word which has divers meanings," he said. "But I am a reasonable man. I am always willing to discuss terms."

"And what might you mean by terms?" I demanded, taking a hand in the conversation.

He deliberated as unconcernedly as if we sat on opposite sides of a table in London, entirely ignoring the huddled corpses at his feet, the line of bodies stiffening in the bitter cold against the stakes and the attendant cordon of Indians whose faces studied his as their fingers itched to resume the torture.

"An undertaking to abandon this wholly barren persecution of my enterprises," he decided. "I should require the signature of Governor Burnet to the document."

"And my companions here?" I asked curiously.

"You forget that even my powers are necessarily limi-

ted," he said. "I could not possibly snatch from my people's vengeance Iroquois warriors taken red-handed in an attempt to massacre them."

I laughed.

"You do not yet know me, Murray."

"Possibly you are subject to education," he retorted, buttoning up his greatcoat. "Come, Marjory."

She drew away from him.

"I choose to remain," she said coldly.

"I choose that you shall not."

He waved his hand in unmistakable signal of release to the watchful False Faces and their followers. A yell of satisfaction swelled from their hungry throats, and they dashed forward. Indeed, so violent was their reaction from the restraint just imposed upon them that in the first mad rush a number of the younger men were carried beyond control of the evil priests and commenced to butcher the Senecas outright with knife and tomahawk.

Marjory shrank back and covered her eyes with her hands as a feather-tufted warrior ran up to Ta-wan-ne-ars and dangled a freshly severed scalp in his face.

" 'Twill be difficult for me to control them at all in a few moments," observed Murray.

"Oh, you vile coward!" exclaimed Marjory, her own courage now regained. "I am steeped in shame whenever I remember that I have in my veins blood that is akin to yours."

"You are unreasonable, my mistress," he remonstrated. "I am giving the young man a chance for his life."

He addressed me directly.

"You will bear me out, Master Ormerod, that I warned you life on the frontier was not pretty. We who deal with savages must employ measures designed to strike their imaginations. We can not be overdainty. We——"

He looked up in amazement, as a mantle of silence enveloped the Council-Place for the second time.

"O my people," boomed a harsh voice in the Cahnuaga

dialect, "verily Ha-ne-go-ate-geh has claimed you! You are mad! You toy with your enemies here when the warriors of the Long House are as thick along the Doom Trail as the falling leaves of Autumn. The Keepers who were on watch are dead or in flight. At any minute the Iroquois will be here. They have burned Ga-o-no-geh. The snow of the Trail is trampled flat by their multitudes. Aye, the Doom Trail is bringing doom upon its Keepers."

The tall, severe figure of Black Robe pushed through the surrounding masses of renegades until he had reached Marjory's side.

"What have they done to you, my daughter?" he asked kindly, his tone changing as if by magic. "I was led away by a false story."

She pointed down at the corpses of Ga-ha-no and de Veulle. Père Hyacinthe made the sign of the cross and muttered a brief prayer.

"Providence works mysteriously," he sighed. "Once I trusted this man—" and he swung around with stern hostility upon Murray—"and this one here. Now I think I know them for what they were, servants of evil who employed the force of God's holy Word in the furtherance of their own wicked plans.

"France is great, my daughter. France has a destiny before her. But her greatness and her destiny may not be reached through by-paths of sin and evil-doing."

He would have said more, but Murray intervened.

"I will answer your personal comments at a future time, sir," he said; "but do I understand you to say that the Doom Trail has been penetrated by the Iroquois?"

"They are almost at your door," replied Black Robe sternly.

" 'Sdeath!" swore Murray. "This is too much!"

He raised his voice in a shout.

"To your arms, O Keepers of the Trail! The Iroquois are upon us!"

But his words were drowned in a racket of firing from

the heart of the Evil Wood. A number of the False Faces emerged from the shelter of the firs, their awful masks wabbling unsteadily.

"The People of the Long House!" they wailed. "The People of the Long House are come!"

"We are attacked back and front," snarled Murray. "Well, Master Ormerod, you and your friend the chief are excellent hostages."

He bellowed a series of commands which brought some degree of order out of the confusion, and dispatched one party of Keepers into the Wood to resist the attack from that quarter. Another body he sent through the village to hold the approaches of the Doom Trail. Under his directions the remainder of the warriors unbound the surviving prisoners from the stakes and escorted us to the stockaded house in which he dwelt.

As we passed the chapel we saw Black Robe standing in the doorway. His eyes were fixed upon the heavens.

"You were a chosen people!" he cried. "You were the few selected from the many! The Word of God was brought to you, and you saw the light—or said you did. Your feet were set upon the narrow way. A great work was given you to do.

"But you wandered far afield, back into unexplored realms of the ancient wickedness of your race. You became devil-worshipers in secret; aye, eaters of human flesh. You lived a life of deceit. You became tools of Ha-ne-go-ate-geh.

"Great was your fall, and great will be your punishment therefor. You will be torn up, root and branch. You will be banished from your villages and exiled to a strange country. Your warriors will die under the tomahawk, your children will be reared by your enemies. You will perish, O Keepers of the Trail! Your end is——"

Cowering under the whip-lashes of his words, the Keepers hurried by the chapel, and ran us inside the stockade. In the doorway they paused to await the coming of Murray.

He arrived presently, with Marjory hanging unwillingly on his arm.

"The prisoners?" he rasped in answer to the question of our guards. "Take them to the cellar. Look to their security if you value your lives."

An echo of distant shouts reached our ears as we stood there, and across the posts of the stockade we saw the Keepers streaming from the Evil Wood and at their heels certain darting, quick-moving figures that we knew must be the warriors of the Eight Clans.

"It is time to bring our women and children inside the stockade," proposed one of the Cahnuagas.

Murray shook his head.

"We have not room nor food to spare," he refused with iron determination.

Discontent showed in the faces of the Keepers, for even these fiends knew the instinct of domestic affection; but Murray cut off attempts at protestation.

"See," he said, as the sound of firing came from the southward, "we are surrounded. We are ignorant of the strength of the Iroquois. It may be all we can do to defend ourselves. Women and children would be so many inconveniences to us."

And whilst a squad of savages conducted us to our prison the rest manned the firing-platforms around the stockade and prepared to cover the retreat of the Keepers, who were falling back rapidly before the hard-driving attacks of the Iroquois.

I sought for a word with Marjory as we entered the door, but Murray deliberately strode between us. All I gained was a glance from her eyes that bade me be strong and confident. And I needed all the strength and confidence I could obtain during that dreadful afternoon and night in the cellar, with the shouts of the opposing sides and the discharegs of their muskets the sole tidings to reach us of what went on above.

Ta-wan-ne-ars sat with his back to a wall, his eyes fixed

on vacancy, his lips murmuming at intervals Ga-ha-no's name. I tried to interest him in what went on without success. He looked at me, and turned his eyes away.

In desperation I struggled with two of our eight surviving comrades to untie our bonds, and after hours of trial we succeeded and released the others. This permitted me to pay attention to those who had been injured. One had a broken shoulder, the result of a blow from a war-club the night we were captured. One had been partially scalped at the stake, and three had been hacked and cut in the preliminary stages of torture.

We slept little that night, for we were very cold and we had no food. But in the morning the Keepers thrust a pan of corn-mush within the door and we ate it to the last kernel. I forced a portion upon Ta-wan-ne-ars, feeding him with a stick we found on the floor.

After that we slept for several hours, and then a lanthorn gleamed on the stairs and Murray stepped into our midst, an immaculate periwig on his head, his linen spotless, his brown cloth suit as fresh as if direct from the tailor's hands.

He set the lanthorn on the dirt floor and stood beside it.

"A good morrow to you, Master Ormerod," he began. "I have come to hold counsel with you."

" 'Tis more than kind," I observed sarcastically.

"Nay, 'tis no more than a proposition of business," he returned coolly. "Look you, my friend, we each of us have that which the other wants. In such a case sensible men come to terms."

"If I remember rightly you were speaking of terms only yesterday," I said dryly.

"True, and naturally I was not then disposed to yield you much."

"I would not trust you now on any terms," I said flatly.

"Tut, tut, sir. Is that language for one gentleman to employ to another?"

"You are not a gentleman, sir; you are——"

He glowered.

"Have a care, sir," he warned.

"You are a scoundrel," I finished.

He made a gesture of magnificent disdain.

"Let it pass, let it pass. Your opinion, Master Ormerod, is of little moment to me. What I seek is an accommodation of our mutual desires."

"As how?"

He pursed his lips.

"Look you, Master Ormerod," he replied, "I have you fast here. I have also the chief, your friend. I have in addition one you love."

"Before you proceed further," I interrupted, "I wish you to answer me one question: Whose child is she?"

He hesitated, and regarded me sidewise.

"Oh, well," he said after a moment, "it might as well out now as later. She'd tell you herself, I suppose. The maid is the child of my sister."

"And her name?"

"She is a Kerr of Fernieside," he answered pompously. "I should add, sir, that I have been at particular pains with the girl, having an especial affection for her."

"Oh," I murmured politely. "An especial affection!"

"Even so."

He bowed elegantly.

"I have treated her as my own daughter. Her father was lost in the '15, and since then, seeing that her mother was dead, I have made her my charge. She hath been well educated in a dame's school in Edinburgh."

"Well, of that we will say no more," I said. "I find it unpleasant to hear you talk of her."

He frowned, but made no reply.

"You consider us as hostages, then?" I continued.

"Yes. I might as well admit to you that I am surrounded here. The Iroquois have sent out the largest war-party ever I saw."

"You are helpless, but you attempt to impose terms," I said.

"Pardon me, sir; I am not helpless," he objected. "If the worst comes to the worst I shall give intelligence to my opponents of my intent to blow up my house and my hostages and undertake to fight a way through the Iroquois. Better a death in such fashion than captivity and disgrace, let alone the torture-stake."

I considered this, and gauged him as capable of doing all that he said.

"Yes," I assented finally; "being what you are, you have advantages on your side. What are your terms?"

"A safe-conduct for me and my people to Canada."

"So that you may restore your trade again?"

A look of sorrow fitted over his face.

"I can not restore it, Master Ormerod. That fact is indisputable. My one hold upon public opinion was my success and the power it gave me. Let me fail and lose my power, and my influence is dead."

"Yes," I agreed; "that is true."

"Moreover," he went on, "my savages are killed or scattered. My organization is gone. My most valuable servants are slain."

"And Mistress Marjory?"

He regarded me oddly.

"Do you care to sue for her hand?" he parried.

"I shall wed her, if she pleases," I responded; "but I do assure you, sir, I have no intent to approach you in the matter."

"You make a grave mistake then. I should like to settle upon her a jointure proportionate to her birth and heritage."

My first sensation of amusement was turned to ridicule.

"Murray," I said, "you seem not to understand that honest men and women want nothing of your bloody, ill-gotten money. I know that Mistress Marjory will uphold

me in this. All we ask of you is that you should disappear, erase yourself."

He flushed, but had himself in hand immediately.

"You have insulted me more than enough, sir," he said with dignity. "Let us end this interview. Are you prepared to go outside the stockade and secure consent to the terms we have discussed, giving your word of honor to return here afterwards?"

I bowed.

"I will do so, but first permit me to acquaint my companions."

And as rapidly as I could I informed the Senecas of the upshot of our talk. All heard it with relief, save Ta-wan-ne-ars. His sombre eyes looked through and beyond me.

"My Lost Soul!" was his response. "I must seek my Lost Soul, brother!"

"In time," I assured him gently. "Do you bide here and await me, and presently you shall go hence and seek her if you wish."

XXIX

THE BARRING OF THE DOOM TRAIL

"QUA, O-te-ti-an-i!"

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh's right arm was lifted in the salute. The little group of Indians standing at his side on the fringe of the woods overlooking the smoking ruins of La Vierge du Bois repeated the greeting. Corlaer, his broad face with its insignificant, haphazard features shining with emotion, grasped my hand and wrung it heartily.

"You hafe der lifes of a cat, my friendt!" he exclaimed. "We hafe foundt der torture stakes with der bodies of some of your party andt——"

He paused and glanced at Do-ne-ho-ga-weh. The Guardian of the Western Door drew himself up proudly.

"Ga-ha-no did wrong," he said, "but she died as became the daughter of a *roy-an-eh* of the Long House."

"She died like a warrior," I replied.

"O-te-ti-an-i makes the heart of Do-ne-ho-ga-weh very glad," acknowledged the *roy-an-eh*. "Can he still my fears for my nephew?"

"Ta-wan-ne-ars fought like a chief," I answered. "But his heart was made very sad by the death of Ga-ha-no and his mind has wandered from him for a space."

"It will return," affirmed Do-ne-ho-ga-weh. "Now tell us, O my white son, do you come hither as a captive or a conqueror?"

"I come to offer the terms of Murray; but first tell me how successful you have been, so that I may know whether I should advise acceptance of what he offers."

Do-ne-ho-ga-weh swept his arm around the horizon.

"Everywhere you see ashes and destruction," he replied. "The Keepers of the Trail are dead or imprisoned in Murray's stockade. Their women and children are our prisoners. Our belts can scarcely support the loads of scalps we have taken. We have swept the Doom Trail."

A new figure stepped forward—modestly, as became a young warrior in the company of *roy-an-ehs* and chiefs. 'Twas the Otter. He too saluted me.

"We thought that you escaped the ambush," I said. "You did well. Great will be the fame of the Otter."

He selected two from a bundle of scalps at his belt and held them aloft.

"Two pursued the Otter when he ran from the Evil Wood," he boasted. "But none returned to tell the way he took. The Otter hastened day and night, O my white brother, O-te-ti-an-i, hoping he might bring warriors to rescue you from the Keepers."

"The Otter did well," I repeated. "Had it not been for him, Murray might have been able to flee to Canada. As it is, the warriors of the Long House have surrounded him. He wishes only to save his life. Harken to the terms he offers."

They listened without comment to Murray's proposition.

"But we have a hostage, also," objected Do-ne-ho-ga-weh when I had finished. "We have been holding him for the torture-stake. Perhaps Murray will be willing to accept less when he learns that we have taken Black Robe."

"No, Black Robe means nothing to Murray," I said.

And I described the clash between the two rulers of La Vierge du Bois over the wedding of Marjory.

"It does not matter," commented Do-ne-ho-ga-weh. "Black Robe is our enemy, and we will torture him to avenge our warriors who have perished here at the stake."

"No, no," I objected. "You must let him go. The Great Spirit has set his seal upon him. Twice before this he has been tortured, yet he still lives."

"The third time may be the last," insisted Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, and the other chiefs murmured agreement with him.

"Will my father yield the life of Black Robe to me as a special gift?" I tried again. "He befriended the maiden I hope to marry. I should like to set him free."

They consulted together, and Corlaer urged my cause. In the end Do-ne-ho-ga-weh assented because, he said, I had brought good luck to the Long House and this was the first favor I had requested.

"And now," he concluded, "take back this message to Murray, my white son. Tell him that he is to surrender his house as it stands, with all it contains. Tell him that he is to give up to us the maiden he calls his daughter, whom you desire to wed. Tell him that he is to send forth the prisoners he has taken. Tell him that he is to render up all the arms he has in his possession.

"And then he and those of the Keepers of the Trail who are left to him shall march out, and the People of the Long House will escort them to Jaraga, where they shall be handed over to Joncaire to dispose of as pleases Onontio and the French.

"Na-ho!"

I said good-bye to them, and tramped back across the clearing to the stockade above which waved a white napkin fastened to a ramrod. Murray awaited me just within the gate. The Keepers, in their fantastic feather headdresses, crouched on the firing-platform and peered down at us fearfully. Splotches of blood in the dirty snow showed where several of them had been killed by the plunging fire of the Iroquois from the trees which rimmed the clearing.

Murray heard my report in silence, and cast his eye over the surrounding scene before replying.

"It shall be done," he said at last. "Was ever a man so sorely tried by fate? Zooks! 'twill cost me a pretty penny and no slight effort to recoup my fortunes."

I regarded him with amazement.

"Do you think to be tolerated hereabouts in the future?" I asked.

"Hereabouts? It may be so; it may not be," he answered musingly. "But my star is no ordinary star, Master Ormerod. And despite my demerits, which seem to have impressed you unduly, if you will allow me to say so, I am not entirely without certain capacities which are valuable in adversity."

"The devil looks out for his own!" I ejaculated rudely.

"Needs must, if the devil drives," he countered. "Ah, well, we are simply headed toward another fruitless bicker. You are strangely burdened by that animus which the clergy dub conscience. Your judgment is biased."

"Where you are concerned."

"I fear so," he deplored. "Let us set a term to this debate. Does our treaty go into effect at once?"

"Yes."

"So be it. I will give orders to have your friends conducted here."

The battered remnants of our war-party appeared with Ta-wan-ne-ars walking in the lead, his face once more a study in impassive rigor.

"Murray says we are free, brother," he said, stepping to my side.

"It is true."

The sadness shone momentarily in his eyes.

"I have had a bad dream, brother," he went on.

" 'Twas no dream," I cried. "Do not doubt your sorrow, Ta-wan-ne-ars. It was——"

"It was a dream," he answered steadily. "My Lost Soul is redeemed by Ha-wen-ne-yu and is gone on before me for a visit to Ata-ent-sic. But in a little time, when I am rested, I shall go after her and fetch her back to dwell happily with me in my lodge."

"But how can you, a mortal, journey into the hereafter?" I protested.

"Did I not tell you an old tale of my people of a warrior

who ventured to the Land of Lost Souls? O my brother, the Great Spirit is generous. He recognizes courage and true love. If I am daring of everything, surely he will stand my aid and help me into Ata-ent-sic's country."

"It can not be!"

"How shall we know it can not be until we have tried? Ta-wan-ne-ars will try."

I could say no more. Such simple faith was unanswerable. And I watched him, quietly directing the piling of the weapons of the Keepers and the unbarring of the gate in the stockade. I wondered how much of it was the unconscious working on a sensitive mind of the very Christianity he had rejected.

Marjory's voice recalled me to the present.

"Master Murray tells me he hath surrendered," she said.

I turned eagerly to find her at my side. My hands leaped out for hers, and she yielded them without hesitation, her brave eyes beaming love and comradeship unashamed.

"Yes, we are free, Marjory. Will you come with me——"

She caught my meaning, and made to pull away from me.

"But we will have had no wooing," she exclaimed, half between laughter and tears. "Sure, sir, you will not be expecting a maid to yield without suit?"

I would not let her go.

"Every minute that hath passed since I stepped into the main cabin of the *New Venture* to see the face of the mysterious songbird hath been a persistent suit," I declared.

"And you would really wed an unrelenting Jacobite?" she murmured.

"Whatever you are I love you, and as a reformed Jacobite I can see reasons for forgiving your contumacy."

Her face grew serious.

"As I told you once before—" she shuddered with the memory of the incident—"I have learned much since leaving Scotland. I know that you are no traitor and your beliefs are honorable and patriotic, and that Country means

more than King. But, Harry, you will be overlooking the narrowness of a poor maid brought up in a Scots Jacobite household to consider the Stuart cause sacred—will you not?"

"So sweet a recantation!" sneered Murray at my elbow. "He will never be able resist you, my dear."

She withdrew so that I stood between her and her uncle.

"I have supported much from you, sir," she answered coldly; "in part through mistaken loyalty to the object you said you served; in part because, evil though you were, you were my flesh and blood. But from this day I disown you. I will be having naught to do with you. You mean nothing to me. You are a horrid specter I expel from my mind."

He shrugged his shoulders.

" 'Tis a fitting reward for the loving care I gave you, Mistress Marjory. You are with me until my fortunes wane. Well, I am content. Henceforth Andrew Murray plays his own hand alone. Yet it suits me, my children, to annoy you to the extent of assuring you my blessing and good wishes.

"You are a fine, healthy maid, Marjory. As for Master Ormerod, he hath been a resourceful enemy, and as the first man to cry 'Checkmate!' against me I congratulate him."

Ta-wan-ne-ars tapped him on the shoulder and he swung around to meet the frowning gaze of the Seneca.

"You are a prisoner, Murray. Come with Ta-wan-ne-ars."

" 'Sdeath, I was to have safe-conduct!"

"You are to go safely to Jagara—yes." I interposed; "but think not we will trust you at liberty."

He took snuff and dusted his lapels carefully.

"Have your way, noble Iroquois," he sighed. "A little while, and I shall be quit of you."

The warriors of the Long House came pouring through the gates of the stockade, and their war-whoops echoed over the forest as they commenced the work of looting

Murray's establishment and securing their prisoners. As Marjory and I passed out of that sinister enclosure, which had seen so much of wickedness and human suffering, we had our last joint glimpse of Andrew Murray. The Otter was lashing his arms at his back, and on his face was a look of whimsical distaste.

"Farewell, my children," he called. "Bear in mind 'twas Andrew Murray brought you together. So good cometh out of evil."

Marjory shrank closer against my side.

"Yes," she said; "take me away from here. Let us go away, Harry—and forget."

But 'twas Corlaer, and not I, who escorted my lady to Albany and the tender care of Mistress Schuyler, into whose charge Governor Burnet most kindly commended her. For duty commanded me to discharge my obligation of removing Murray and his Cahnuagas—not many survived the castigation of the Iroquois—in safety to Jagara; and I must accompany Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and Ta-wan-ne-ars and the warriors of the Eight Clans in the triumphal procession which traversed the Long House from the Upper Mohawk Castle to the shores of the Thunder Waters as an illustration of the wrath of the Great League.

And I was not sorry that I did so, for it enabled me to sit beside Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and his brother chiefs in the half-finished stone fort at Jagara and hear him lay down the law of the Long House to Joncaire, as representative of the French.

"*Qua,* O Joncaire, mouthpiece of Onontio who rules at Quebec," he said. "We people of the Long House come to you in peace. And we give into your hands the white man Murray and those who are still alive of the Keepers of the Doom Trail. We promised that they should come here, and we have fulfilled our promise. But we have set a bar across the Doom Trail, O mouthpiece of Onontio, and we desire you to tell the French of that.

"If Onontio chooses, we will live in peace with him,

and—" this was a crafty use of an advantage I had forced upon him—"in earnest of our friendship we have saved the life of the Frenchman called Black Robe, although he has been no friend of our people. But the Doom Trail is closed to red men and white men alike. We have obliterated it. We have set a bar across it.

"It is our wish that you should acquaint Onontio with our decision. We ask him to assist us in wiping out this source of trouble between us.

"*Na-ho!*"

"I have heard your message, O *roy-an-ehs* and chiefs of the Long House," replied Joncaire. "I will repeat it to Onontio, but I do not think it will be welcome in his ears. As to the white man Murray, why do you bring him to me? He is English. You should carry him to the English at Albany."

"He asked to be brought to you," returned Do-ne-ho-ga-weh, and thus spiked an adroit attempt to shift the implied responsibility for Murray's enterprises in the past.

"Very well," said Joncaire. "You may leave him here. Do you enter any charge against him?"

"We might enter many charges against him," answered Do-ne-ho-ga-weh grimly. "But we pledged our word to bring him here in safety—and we have washed away the stains of his offenses in the blood of the Keepers of the Trail."

"He shall tell his story to Onontio," replied Joncaire, politely threatening. "I am pleased with your assurances of peacefulness. I have no more to say."

But as the Iroquois were leaving he buttonholed me in the sallyport.

"I know you, my lad from Arles," he said jocosely. "I knew you the minute I laid my eyes on you. You have played ducks and drakes with high policies in your few months on the frontier. I hope your people appreciate you."

I laughed and returned his compliment. He waxed serious.

"For myself I am not so sorry this has happened," he declared. "I'll fight the English any day—and beat them, too. But I like not this stealthy intriguing by crime, by perverting the poor savages, by downright cruelty and superstition. This fellow de Veulle, now——"

"He's dead," I interrupted.

"*Ma foi,* you seem to have made a clean sweep of it, Jean! You are a lad after my own heart. De Veulle, he was a bad one. He cast discredit on France. I am glad you disposed of him. Let us fight clean and win clean, I say. Do you tell that to your governor."

"I will," I promised, laughing.

"You haven't a chance, you know," continued Joncaire gravely. "Not a chance."

"It seems to me you once told me at some length of the importance of the fur-trade," I suggested.

"*Peste!* Did I? Well, it has its place, lad. But if you have rooted out that excrescence at La Vierge du Bois we have a tight little fortalice here at Jagara. 'Twill serve, 'twill serve. And you English have no imagination. Once in a while you get a good man—Burnet for example. But you do not trust him, and you invariably have your Murrays who want another king than his Majesty who sits in London and will pay any price we ask for promises of help we never keep.

"Must you be going? Adieu, then! And do not be setting any of your neat snares for me, Monsieur l'Arlesien."

XXX

FROM PEARL STREET TO HUDSON'S RIVER

THE sun bathed the dust of Pearl Street wherever it could steal between the layers of the thick-leafed boughs overhead. I lounged on the doorstep of our cozy, red-brick house by the corner of Garden Street, and reread the letter from Master Juggins which the supercargo of the Bristol packet had delivered a half-hour earlier.

My Hart is rejoiced, deare Lad, at ye Excelant report of you which is come From Governour Burnet. Granny was so Plesed she sang untill ye Prentises sent word above-stares Beseching a Treate of ale which ye Swete Soul dispached at once. I have This Day taken out ye Papers of partnership in Your name, and when this Reches you ye sign above ye Doore will run as Juggins & Ormerod.

Murray's discomfitur hath had Exceding Advantageous efects in ye Citie and ye Marchaunts who Earley did Clamor for ye freedom of Trade with ye French are now Perceveinge how ye Planne of Governour Burnet did Sette to their Profit in ye Longe Runne. Use your Own Judgmente, I praye you, in developping ye Provincial Trade and draw Upon mee at will for what Funds you Maye need.

Grannie and I do send you our Love and Respect and She biddes me say she Considders 'Twas ye Actte of Godde I was sette Upon in ye Mincing Lane what time you Came to my Rescue. We desire that you and Mistress Marjory may Deem ye house in Holbourne your home and 'twould deelight our Eyes might we See you Here. Butte of that you will bee ye Judges. Ye New World is ye world for Youth, of that There can bee no Dispute.

I do Enclose ye Miniature of your Mother which an Agente

hath secured from ye Jew on ye Quai de l'Horloge in Paris as you Tolde mee and Agane do Salute you with Afectionate Regarde and asure you and your Wife all ye Love that Words may encompass.

I drew the miniature from my pocket and recalled the damp, wintry day in Paris I had made up my mind to quit the Jacobite cause and try my fortune at all risks in England; the pang with which I had abandoned the last link remaining with my dead parents; the rough trip in the smuggler's lugger; the wet landing at night on the dreary Channel coast; the fruitless attempts to enlist the aid of former friends; the hue and cry upstart cousins had raised; the flight to London; the——

"Ha, there, Ormerod!"

I looked up to see the burly figure of Governor Burnet rounding the corner. He waved a handful of papers at me.

"The packet hath brought great news!" he cried.

"What is it, your Excellency?"

"The Lords of Trade have seen the light, —— 'em! After we had overridden 'em and pounded sense into their thick heads with mallets, by gad! But they are coming around to our view, and for that a humble provincial governor should be thankful, I daresay. Do but hark to this!"

And, standing with legs spread apart in the middle of the paved sidewalk, he read:

"And seeing that the resentment of the Six Nations is so deeply stirred by reason of the tabling of the law, we are resolved that the provincial Government shall have authority to impose the duties upon trade-goods for Canada as before. And his Excellency the governor shall be required to file a complete report of the situation with such addenda, facts and statistics relative to amounts and totals of trade and fluctuations therein in the recent past as may be helpful to their lordships in reaching a final decision in this matter."

He shook the paper with a quaint mixture of derision and satisfaction.

"A final decision, forsooth! The plain truth, Ormerod, is that the protests of the French Court have aroused our merchants at home to a realization of the dangers they ran, and now that Murray is defeated and broken his friends and fellow-plotters have no reason for pushing their intrigue. 'Tis a commentary, indeed, upon the brains we have at Whitehall. I say naught of the City men, who after all can not be expected to be familiar with politics and the interplay of national ambitions.

"There is more of the same tone as that I read, but I will not burden you with it. Do but wait until I write them, as I shall by the first sailing, that the price of beaver is declined again at Montreal to half our quotations at Albany. Aye, and that we are sending into the wilderness country this Summer twice the number of traders who went out last year.

"But I am selfishly occupied with my own interests, Ormerod. Here is a matter which more nearly concerneth yourself."

He produced a large rolled sheet of parchment, imposingly enscrolled, across the top of which ran the legend:

A FREE PARDON

" 'Twas bound to come," he rambled on. "Do you go within and show it to Mistress Ormerod."

But Marjory had been listening at the window, and as I opened the door she fell into my arms and clung there, sobbing for the relief that came to both of us with the lifting of the menace which had overhung my life so long.

"There, there," admonished the governor. "Gadslife, what does the girl weep for?"

"Be-be-because—I am—so—happy," answered Marjory.

"Heaven help us, should you weep for grief!" he

exclaimed. "And what will you say when I tell you I am come likewise to summon your husband to attend for the first time as a member of the Council?"

His rubicund face gleamed with pleasure at the joy he had inspired in two hearts.

"Tut, tut, 'tis nothing," he pursued his discourse. "I do but serve myself. I have been housecleaning this past Spring. There were rats in the Council who sought to trip me in the days you know of. They are gone. Ormerod should have had a seat ere this but 'twas best to await the pardon."

"I am so happy I know not what to do," protested Marjory, wiping her eyes. "But, oh, see who comes!"

We followed her pointing finger; and there, striding between the ordered house-fronts of Pearl Street, exactly as I had seen him the first time we met, came Ta-wan-ne-ars, the eagle's feather slanting from his scalp-lock, the wolf's head of his clan insignia painted on his naked chest. His grave face was smiling. His right arm was raised in salute.

"*Qua,* Ga-en-gwa-ra-go! *Qua,* friends! Ta-wan-ne-ars greets you."

"You are just arrived?" I asked.

"This hour landed, brother, from the river-sloop."

"Have you any frontier news?" questioned the governor, alert as always for tidings of his distant dominions.

"Only news of peace. The frontier is quiet. The Doom Trail is closed. Do-ne-ho-ga-weh and To-do-da-ho say to Ga-en-gwa-ra-go that the French have forgotten the threats they made. The Covenant Chain was too strong for them, and so long as the English and the People of the Long House keep their hands clasped the peace will endure."

"I told the French that the People of the Long House had the right to destroy a force which assailed their interests," responded the governor. "And his Majesty my King sent word to the French King that my words were straight."

"Ga-en-gwa-ra-go is a friend to the Great League," re-

joined the Seneca. "His fame as a truth-teller and a covenant-keeper has gone broadcast. The far tribes are traveling to Albany to offer their allegiance and friendship to him. The fur-trade is once more under control of the English and the Long House."

"We have waited long for you to visit us, brother," I said. "Now that you have come we shall make you stay many moons."

His smile became sad.

"It can not be. Ta-wan-ne-ars comes to say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Yes, brother. Have you forgotten the search for my Lost Soul?"

"But she is dead!"

"She is with Ata-ent-sic."

"What is this that you speak of?" demanded the governor.

And we told him the story of Ga-ha-no, while the sunshine mottled the dust of Pearl Street and the life of the little town droned sleepily under the trees.

Master Burnet drew a deep breath when the tale was finished.

"You really believe you may find this Land of Lost Souls out there"—he motioned over the scattered house-tops toward Hudson's River—"beyond the setting sun?"

"The ancient tales of my people say that I may," replied Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"And why not?" returned the governor. "God alone—and I say it with all fitting reverence—knows what lies beyond the wilderness country.

"Go, Ta-wan-ne-ars. Seek your Lost Soul. Even if you do not find the shadow land of Ata-ent-sic, you may find wonders that your people and mine have never dreamed of."

"Yes," said the Seneca. "Ta-wan-ne-ars will go. What is life but a search? Some men seek scalps. Some men seek beaver-pelts. Some men seek honors as leaders and orators. Some men seek truth.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars seeks his Lost Soul. He has no fear. He will go through Da-ye-da-do-go-war, the Great Home of the Winds, where Ga-oh, the Wind Spirit, dwells. He will go through Ha-nis-ka-o-no-geh, the Dwelling-Place of the Evil-Minded. He will go to the world's end if the Great Spirit will but guide his footsteps."

"Oh, I pray that you may find what you seek," cried Marjory, the tears in her eyes again. "But sure, you will stay with us a little while?"

"I will go at once, Sister Ne-e-ar-go-ye"—he called her the Bear in memory of her exploit in rescuing us from the False Faces—"now that I have seen my white friends."

"Stay with us a while," she pleaded.

"You would not ask me if you knew how my heart hungered for her whom I have lost," he answered.

"Then go," said Marjory quickly. "And God bless you."

"*Hi-ne-a-weh,*[1] O, my sister. It is time. I have been delayed overlong. There were many things for Ta-wan-ne-ars to do before he could go. The affairs of the Long House required attention. The guard of the Western Door must be secured. But from this day I shall turn my face to the setting sun, and the hunger in my heart will be satisfied—if the Great Spirit wills it, as I think He does."

He would not step indoors for food, but insisted on walking back toward the Broad-Way with Master Burnet and me. At the Bowling Green we encountered Peter Corlaer. His huge belly waggled before him with the energy of his pace, and he was quite out of breath.

"Ha, Peter," the governor hailed him. "Well met, indeed. What hath earned us this honor?"

"I heardt Ta-wan-ne-ars was here," he panted. "I followedt him down rifer from Fort Orange."

"What does Corlaer wish?" asked Ta-wan-ne-ars.

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[1] I thank you.

The big Dutchman stammered and gurgled with embarrassment.

"I go with you," he gasped after much effort.

"But you know not whither I go," said Ta-wan-ne-ars.

"Wherefer you go. Idt does not matter."

"I go to the Land of Lost Souls."

"*Ja,* that's all righdt," returned Corlaer. "I go with you."

"Take him, Ta-wan-ne-ars," advised the governor. " 'Tis a friend you may depend upon who will follow you a week's journey for the privilege of securing your assent to the risking of his life in your service."

The hard lines of the Seneca's stern face were softened by a rare glow of feeling.

"Ta-wan-ne-ars never doubted Corlaer, Ga-en-gwa-ra-go," he answered, squeezing Peter's hand in his. "He would not ask any to go with him because the peril is great. But he will be glad to have Peter by his side. We will take the first boat which leaves."

"One is sailing from der Whale's Headt wharf," suggested Peter.

"Good. Then we will say good-bye here."

"No, no, we will accompany you to the wharf," said the governor. "Where are you from, Peter?"

"I was in der Shawnees' country when I heardt Ta-wan-ne-ars was going upon a long journey alone. So I go to De-o-nun-da-ga-a, andt from there to Fort Orange andt here."

"Have you heard aught of Black Robe since the burning of La Vierge du Bois?"

"He was in der country of der Miamis this Spring, they saidt."

"And Murray?"

"*Nein,* Murray is nefer spoken of. Der French would hafe none of him. They saidt he sailed from Quebec for der Hafana."

"So are the mighty fallen," mused the governor as we

strolled along. "A few short months ago he was more powerful than I in the province. Today he is nobody."

"Beg yer pardons, sirs," wheezed a voice behind us, "but the tapman at the Whale's Head Tavern yonder said as how one o' ye was Master Ormerod."

The speaker was a tarry, grizzled sailor-man, with three fingers slashed off his left hand. He touched his cap knowingly, and ranged up beside us.

"I am Master Ormerod," I told him.

"Ah, yessir. Thanky, sir."

He eyed me keenly.

"It's the face and the figger, right enough. I'd ha' knowed you anywheres."

"Where have I seen you before?" I inquired with surprize.

"Never laid eyes on me, you ain't, sir—nor me on you," he returned promptly.

"What is it you want then?"

I reached into my pocket, thinking perhaps the man was a beggar. 'Twas my lucky day, I reflected, and 'twould be churlish to deny help to one in want.

"I won't be refusin' o' a pan o' rum like," he responded with a grin. "But my business was to give ye this."

And he produced from the inside of his jacket an oblong package wrapped in canvas.

"Here y'are, sir."

He thrust it into my grasp, fisted the shilling I offered him and made off at speed into a convenient alley. I called after him, but he only cast a look over his shoulder and took to his heels.

"Examine the package," said the governor. "'Tis a queer gift a man will not wait to see appraised."

Beneath the canvas was a wrapping of oiled silk, and within that one of heavy linen. As this fell away our eyes were blinded by a dazzling heap of red and white stones linked with bars of gold.

"A necklace of rubies and diamonds," opined Master Burnet. "Spoil of the Indies."

A slip of paper fluttered to the ground. I picked it up. The writing was in brown ink, faded by dampness, but fully legible—a bold, flowing script. It ran:

> From One who shal bee Namelesse, a Gentleman of goode Estate and Name, who is now Under a Cloude but will Yette recover fromme 'ye slings and Arrowes of Outrageous fortune.' Take this so Mistress Ormerod maye not bee Portionlesse. There is More where this came from.

"I'll wager there is," pronounced the governor. "Master Murray hath turned pirate. I would I had that tarry breeks who scurried hence, and we might screw some information from him. But New York town is a favorite haunt of his breed, and he will disappear without trouble."

"What shall I do with it?" I asked in bewilderment.

Ta-wan-ne-ars and Peter joined in the governor's hearty roar of amusement.

"Why, even accept it," quoth Master Burnet. "The villain has tricked you so you can do naught else. 'Tis an extraordinary rogue."

So I pocketed the gems, and we walked out upon the wharf where the sloop *River Queene* lay with her moorings slack.

"Tumble aboard, my masters," shouted the captain. "There's a fair breeze and the tide is flowing."

"Good-bye," said Ta-wan-ne-ars. "Ga-en-gwa-ra-go and O-te-ti-an-i will be always in the thoughts of Ta-wan-ne-ars."

"Goodt-by," mumbled Corlaer.

"Good-bye for a while," retorted the governor. "We shall be ready to welcome you with rejoicing when you return with a brave tale to tell us."

"Good-bye," I called, and my voice choked.

I raised my right arm in the Iroquois gesture of greeting and farewell. Ta-wan-ne-ars answered in kind, motionless as a bronze statue against the dirty gray expanse of the sail.

The sloop dropped her moorings and glided out into the current.

In ten minutes Peter's face was a broad white blotch at the foot of the mast and Ta-wan-ne-ars was a darker blur beside him. They sailed on into the eye of the setting sun.

"'Tis the very spirit of this land, Ormerod," observed Master Burnet as we watched. "Having finished one adventure, they seek a fresh trial of their resource and daring. Ah, well, 'tis for you and me to take their precept and strive to sharpen our wits upon some homely adventures of our own. All of us may not seek the Land of Lost Souls, but each of us may find a worth-while task upon his doorstep."

EPILOGUE

Bow down your heads, O my Readers! He-no, the Thunderer, and Ga-oh, the Old Man of the Winds, are filling the air with confusion. Our Council-Fire is dying. The smoke has drifted away. Ha-wen-ne-yu has shut his ears. The doors to Yesterday are closing.

We will dance the O-ke-wa, the Dance for the Dead, for what was has passed. It is no more. Only the memory of the wise and the brave remains. Not even the Falling Waters of Jagara can sweep away the names of To-do-da-ho and the Shining Ones of the Great League.

They have been honored by Ha-wen-ne-yu. They sit at his side in the Halls of Ho-no-che-no-keh. The Good Spirits laugh and chant their praises as they show the scalps they have taken and recount the tribes they conquered. The De-o-ha-ko, the Three Sisters, our Supporters, are their handmaidens. They flourish in the Hereafter like the Pine-Tree on earth.

Remember them, O my Readers! Remember the Founders! Remember the Long House they built! Remember the warriors of the Eight Clans!

For what you are you owe to them.

Na-ho!

THE END

MAP of the Country of the FIVE NATIO and of the LAKES near which the Nations

elonging to the Province of **NEW YORK**
AR INDIANS live, with part of **CANADA.**

30 | 30 1 | 30 2 | 30 3 | 30 4 | 30 5 | 30 6 | 30 7

120 180 240
f English Miles

der Colden, Surveyor-General, which
before Harry Ormerod. "This province,
er than all Britain."

PART OF CANADA
Troil Rivieres
Quebec
R. St. Laurence
Montreal
Chambly
Champlain Lake
Cadaracui R.
Fort a Cadaracui
Onond
CATARAQUI or ONTARIO LAKE
irondequat
THE DOOM TRAIL
Car. place R.
Car. place to Canada
SENEKAS
Car. place
The Western Door
CAYUGAS
ONEIDOS
ONONDAGUES
The Long House
MOHAWKES
Mohawkes
The Eastern Door
Albany
The Countrey of the FIVE NATIONS
NEW YORK
Hudsons R.
Part of NEW ENGLAND
Allegheny
PENSYL-VANIA
New York
Long I